

# BEGIN WITH GOD

Week 7

## A study of Genesis 1–12

### UNRECOGNIZED

Watch this minute and a half clip—but be sure to watch until the end.

Adrian Peterson (AP) is one of the all-time great running backs. He's been league MVP, offensive player of the year, he holds three rushing titles, and he was the third fastest player to reach 10,000 rushing yards in NFL history. Then, one day, a reporter approaches him to ask about road rage in the community.

The humor of the video comes at the awkward moment of recognition at the end. The reporter thought he was talking to an average Joe, but AP is anything but average. Do you think if the reporter had recognized AP for who he was, he would have still asked him about road rage?

If you think about your last prayer to God, do you think it recognized him for who he is, or was it something less. That's what sin does, it blinds people to who God is—it makes him unrecognizable. We treat God as common instead of recognizing the All-Star in front of us.

Last Week, we read generation after generation between Adam and Noah. While there were a few spiritual standouts, we learn from this Week, over the time those generations, everyone else forgot about God. By the time we get to Noah, he's the only one left who acknowledges God for who he is. Today, we see the severe consequences when God goes unrecognized.

### GENESIS 6:11–14, 17–19

<sup>11</sup> The earth was ruined in the sight of God; the earth was filled with violence. <sup>12</sup> God saw the earth, and indeed it was ruined, for all living creatures on the earth were sinful. <sup>13</sup> So God said to Noah, "I have decided that all living creatures must die, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. Now I am about to destroy them and the earth. <sup>14</sup> Make for yourself an ark of cypress wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it with pitch inside and out... <sup>17</sup> I am about to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy from under the sky all the living creatures that have the breath of life in them. Everything that is on the earth will die, <sup>18</sup> but I will confirm my covenant with you. You will enter the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. <sup>19</sup> You must bring into the ark two of every kind of living creature from all flesh, male and female, to keep them alive with you.



### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In the study notes, we briefly mention the problem of evil. It is often listed as one of the primary reasons people reject the idea of God. It's such an important discussion, it bears repeating.

Also mentioned in the study notes was the famed apologist Ravi Zacharias. In the QR code, we see Ravi's excellent response to a question regarding the problem of evil. This clip is worth saving for when the discussion comes up. You will face this question. Here is an eloquent response.



### DISCUSSION

What would be your most and least favorite animal to be stuck on a boat with for any length of time?

1. Describe Earth's spiritual condition. (11-12)

2. Describe God's plan for...  
The Earth's destruction: (13,17)

Noah's salvation: (14,18)

3. What would be the result for those entering the ark? (19)

4. What does our passage reveal about God in both destroying and saving life?

5. How would you respond to a friend who said, "I can't believe in a God who would allow so much suffering?"

6. How does evil and suffering discourage or strengthen your hope in who God is?

Are you ready for judgment? Are you 1000% sure you'll spend eternity with God? How about your friends and loved ones? If you have any doubts or questions, talk to your coach today.

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

## A study of Genesis 1–12

### STUDY NOTES

#### TAKES, KEEPS, COSTS

"Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay." We experience these words from the late Ravi Zacharias. However, as we open Genesis 6, we witness these words on a whole other level.

Genesis 6:5 describes the wickedness of humankind, *"Every inclination of the thoughts of their minds was only evil all the time."* This is not exaggeration—this is the consequence of unrestrained sin. When God is unrecognized in people's lives, when he is treated as common, wickedness reigns. Wickedness, however, cannot ultimately defeat the Creator and it will be judged.

One of the great objections to Christianity is what philosophers call the "problem of evil." It's worth taking a moment to describe because if you haven't encountered it, you will. The problem of evil asks, "If God is all-powerful and perfectly good, why does he let bad things happen?" The implication is that God is either not powerful enough to stop it or just doesn't care. To take it a step further, why would God allow the world to get as bad as it gets in Genesis 6:5?

There are several philosophical answers to this question, but ultimately, the question is a call for justice, "Evil has hurt *me* and I want God to make it stop!" The problem is that *we do evil too!* Do we want God to stop us? If you dare answer yes, how do we want God to stop us? Should he stop us only if we commit murder, or should he stop the little white lie? Should a person committing evil be killed, or should they forcibly be made to do "right" like a moral robot?

There are several "reasons" God allows evil, but that doesn't make our experience of it less difficult to bear. When encountering it, there are two pillars upon which we must stand: first, God does not waste evil, and second, God will judge evil.

First, God doesn't waste evil. Evil does not come from God, but God overcomes evil to achieve his purposes. Additionally, the suffering we experience in this life becomes our greatest ministry platforms to the degree that, although we would not wish to go through that suffering again, we would not change the lessons learned for any reason. For example, my wife lost both parents at a relatively early age. Now, in her work, she can love on and pray for people in the hospital who are watching ill parents pass away. She knows what they're experiencing because she's been there, and God is using her.

#### GOD'S GRACIOUSNESS IS LONG-SUFFERING

The second pillar upon which we stand when encountering evil is that God will judge it. However, the Bible makes it clear that God waits as long as possible to bring judgment so that people are given the maximum opportunity to turn back to him. He extends long-suffering grace until a point of no return. In the case of Genesis 6, ***The earth was ruined in the sight of God; the earth was filled with violence. God saw the earth, and indeed it was ruined, for all living creatures on the earth were sinful.***

Everything was once "good." Now only ruin, violence, and sin exist. The one exception in the wicked world was Noah. *He was blameless among his contemporaries. He walked with God* (Genesis 6:9). ***So God said to Noah, "I have decided that all living creatures must die, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. Now I am about to destroy them and the earth."***

In other words, God's long-suffering has come to an end and evil will face judgment. What was true for them will one day, be true for us. Judgment will come through Christ. We are living in a time of grace when God is extending the maximum opportunity for people to turn to him. Not only that, he has given the opportunity and obligation for those who know him, to invite people into a relationship with him. On that day, people you know now will face judgment. Will they be ready?

#### GOD IS GRACIOUS

Although God is bringing judgment on the wicked, he sought to spare all of those who faithfully walked with him. Unfortunately for the world at that time, the entirety of those who walked with God was one man. In response to that man's faith, he was saved by grace (see Ephesians 2:8–9). To spare Noah, God told him, ***"Make for yourself an ark of cypress wood... I am about to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy from under the sky all the living creatures that have the breath of life in them. Everything that is on the earth will die."*** Not only does God, in his grace, want to spare Noah and his family, but ***two of every kind of living creature from all flesh, male and female, to keep them alive.***

In the story of Noah, we are again tempted to focus on the "how" at the expense of the "Who." Although some scientists argue over how the ark brought so many living creatures through the flood, they miss the fact that it wasn't the ark that spared those lives. It was God who, using the ark, spared those lives because he is gracious.