

Bible Essentials

Scripture Passage: Genesis 8:15-9:17

As a group, share something about your past week. For example, share prayer requests and answers to prayer. Share the best and worst moments of your week (highs and lows). Write prayer requests here. Open with prayer for these requests and for God to open your hearts to this week's study.

Have you every helped with recovery from a flood? What was your experience like? What did the land look like? What types of tasks did you need to do?

Read today's passage. Discuss your initial impressions of the passage. Write any major points here.

Here is some context for Genesis 8:15-9:17.

Noah and his family have been in the ark for over a year. I would imagine that they are going a little stir crazy, ready to get away from the family and animals they've been stuck with for that time (at least I would be!). The ark may be big for a boat, but it's small compared to having the freedom to roam the entire earth.

They've endured a major tragedy. All the people they once knew, other than those on the ark, have all died. All the animals, other than the ones God brought onto the ark, have all died. All the possessions they accumulated, other than what they brought on the ark, are all destroyed. I would imagine that there would be a bit of emotional trauma that went along with that.

Now, Noah and his family are on the brink of a new life. The ground is dry, and they are ready to leave the safety of the ark. They have a whole new system of society to set up, houses to build, so many things they need to do. Let's see what they do first.

What are your thoughts about the context? Discuss the context as a group. Write some key points here.

Read the passage again. Use a different Bible version if you have one available. Have someone summarize the passage in their own words, and use this space to record that summary.

Look closely at the passage and answer the following questions as a group. Write notes in the space provided.

What does the passage say about God?

What does the passage say about people?

What does the passage say about God's plan?

What else strikes you about this passage?

Understanding how a passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible is important.

In this passage, God gave Noah, his family, and all the animals a command similar to what he gave Adam and Eve—be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth. The rest of the Bible is evidence that they followed this command. We see generations of descendants and read their stories. Even today, we see this command has been followed, with a world population of over 7 billion people.

But God makes one very astute observation—every inclination of the human heart is still evil from childhood. The flood hasn't changed this fact. The people will still need a way to atone for their sins. They will still need a Savior. The rest of the Bible tells the story of how God fulfilled his plan to bring a Savior to the world.

This passage also establishes one of the first covenants in the Bible. God makes a covenant with Noah and all living creatures that he will never again flood the earth and destroy all life. God even puts a rainbow in the sky every time it rains as a reminder of this covenant. In looking through Scripture, a rainbow isn't just something pretty to look at. It is representative of God himself. In both Isaiah 1 and Revelation 4, God's radiance is described as a brilliant rainbow. So next time you see a rainbow, stand in awe that God is letting you see a glimpse of his glory.

What are your thoughts on how this passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible? Discuss as a group. What questions do you have individually or as a group? Discuss potential answers.

As a group, use the following questions to apply today's Scripture passage to your life.
How does this passage affect how you view God?

How does this passage affect how you view yourself?

How does this passage affect how you will live your life?

Close in prayer, asking God to help you apply what you learned today.