

Aim of lesson

To show that God will not allow wickedness to continue indefinitely; he brings judgement. He also patiently warns and provides a way of escape.

Bible background

Genesis 6; 7; 8; 9:1-17; Hebrews 11:7; Matthew 24:36-51; 1 Peter 3:18-22; 2 Peter 2:5.

Outline of lesson

What was the problem?

Read together Genesis 6:5-14. Ask the class what was wrong with the world of Noah's day. Draw attention to verses 5,12,13. You may like to include Christ's words in Matthew 24:38, but leave the parallel with today until later.

The Lord saw

Turn to the workbooks and use the first three questions to discuss together:

1. God's opinion and judgement on the way of life at that time.
2. What it must have been like for Noah, facing the ridicule and mockery of his neighbours.
3. How he witnessed by obeying God's instructions and how he must have witnessed when asked what he was doing.

When the rain came down

Get the class to search for the answers to the questions in the Ark. Use them to lead into a discussion of what it must have been like for Noah and his family when the rain began and all their world: home, relations and all the people they knew, were swept away. Imagine the long period when they were in the Ark and later what it must have been like for them to go out of the Ark after all that time, to walk on dry land, to feel the sun and see things growing. Lead the class to compare this new world with the old one. Bring in Noah's thankfulness and God's promise. Discuss how Noah's faith and relationship with God must have grown through this experience.

As it was in the days of Noah

Get the class to look up Matthew 24:36-51. You may like to read together verses 36-41. Discuss together and answer the questions about the coming of Christ, showing how applicable the words are today. Use verses 44-51 to draw out the lesson of being prepared by watching and serving. If you have plenty of time, this could usefully be expanded by looking at the three 'getting ready for his coming' parables in the next chapter, Matthew 25. Have the class think of specific steps that Noah took to be saved, – he believed, obeyed, and witnessed – and how they apply to us.

Baptism

Get the class to look up 1 Peter 3:20,21 to discover that baptism now saves us; not just a bath to get clean physically, but an appeal to God to wash our consciences clean by forgiving our sins.

Note: verses 18-19 may not come up for discussion, but since they are part of the same statement by Peter, you may find these comments helpful. In 1 Peter 1:10-11 Peter speaks of the prophets searching to discover what it was that the spirit of Christ within them was teaching. This simply means that God had given them the same attitude of mind that Jesus would have – the same desire to help and to save people. In the same way Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5) who wanted to save people from the flood – but they would not listen.

Digging deeper

Promises to a New World

This section looks at the promises God made after the flood. It also looks at the incident of the Tower of Babel, which is not otherwise covered in these lessons and shows that God will fulfil his promises despite man's attempts to thwart them.

Relevance to our lives

You may like to choose the idea of witnessing and ask the class how they think they can witness for God during the next week. Will it be by not joining in bad behaviour, by doing what God asks us to, or by answering when someone asks us why we go to Sunday School?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us a way to be saved. Help us to care about what pleases you. Help us to be witnesses for you and to get ready for when the Lord Jesus comes.

Other suggestions for activities

- Three groups could each write a prayer that Noah might have said
 - during the time of building and witnessing,
 - when in the Ark,
 - after coming out.
- If you have a field or a park near by, take the class and measure out the Ark. Get them to talk about living quarters, room for the animals, keeping food fresh. You may well get questions from onlookers, so did Noah no doubt, but discuss with the class what should be said, before going out.