

# REDISCOVERING OUR PLACE IN GOD'S STORY



## ACT 2 BIBLE STUDY

### OPENING QUESTIONS

- 1) We often think of sin as something trivial, as if it were merely breaking one of God's rules in the way that some of us break the speed limit on the highway. How would you define sin?
- 2) How does sin relate to the following questions:
  - Who am I? What does it mean to be human?
  - Where am I? Where did our world come from?
  - What is wrong? Why does this world seem to be so troubled?
  - What is the remedy? Can humans alone fix the problems of the world?
- 3) Sin does not ordinarily destroy what God has made, but it does distort it. Discuss some ways in which God's good gifts (such as food, drink, sexuality, family, work, and leisure) have been distorted by our sin.

### SCRIPTURE **Read Genesis 6:9-22.**

This is the account of Noah and his family.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

- 1) What do you think it means that Noah was a righteous and blameless man who walked faithfully with God? How was this different from most people on earth at the time?
- 2) How does the writer of Genesis describe the world in the time of Noah. What does this demonstrate about the progression and results of sin from the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3? Has the world changed much since? Why or why not?
- 3) What does this story tell us about the character of God and what he thinks of sin? How do you reconcile a story about God's catastrophic judgment of the world with a God of love expressed in the person of Jesus?
- 4) Despite the horrific judgement of the flood, how does God also demonstrate his faithfulness and mercy to human beings?
- 5) How would you have responded to being asked to build an ark like Noah? What does this teach us about Noah's character and faith? Have you ever felt like God was asking you to do something that you didn't understand or that seemed a bit crazy to those around you? How did you respond? What did God reveal about himself through that experience?

## **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

- 1) We all sin. Despite that truth, what does it mean for us to walk faithfully before God like Noah did?
- 2) Sin has marred our relationships with God, with each other, and with the creation. Discuss concrete ways in which each of these relationships has been twisted out of shape by our sin.
- 3) Act 2 is the part of the biblical story where human beings rebel against their good and loving Creator. Despite this rebellion, we see glimpses of God's heart and commitment to rescuing his creation from our sin. Read Genesis 8:15-22. What does this passage teach us about God's heart and commitment to us and this world?
- 4) When we sin today, how can we experience the grace and forgiveness of God? What are some habits or disciplines you can adopt to experience God's forgiveness in your life?

## **SPIRITUAL EXERCISE**

Read 1 John 1:5 - 2:2. Create a new daily habit: Spend time each evening this week reflecting on your day: Were there times when you knowingly or unknowingly chose selfishness over love, greed over generosity, lust over purity, anger over grace, or harshness over gentleness? When did you fail to love God with all of your life and love your neighbor as yourself? Spend a few moments asking for God's forgiveness and then thanking him for his faithfulness to forgive us for every sin.