

## Final Prayer

God of love, power, glory, truth and grace; open up Your blessings to us. We long to serve You, but feel that there is much for us to learn before we can be of use to You. Help us to take confidence in the presence of Christ with us now, and on that foundation, anticipate greater things. In Your name, Lord God; AMEN

## Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, come amongst Your people today and lift us up.  
Lift us up so that we stop being concerned solely with our own affairs,  
Lift us up so that we are liberated to be concerned for others who suffer,  
Lift us up to perceive how people may be blessed throughout our care,  
Lift us up to have confidence that our prayers open doors for Your love,  
Lord Jesus Christ, come amongst us today and lift us up; AMEN

## Other Prayer Suggestions

### Weekly Theme: Vision

*Pray that God's people will be open, personally, to receiving visions from the Lord which speak directly to their circumstances, and ask the Lord to help you be ready, yourself.*

### On-going prayers

- *Pray for peace in the ongoing civil war within Sri Lanka*
- *Give thanks for the way your body works, and the gift of life*
- *Pray for people who are worried about their jobs at the moment*

## Meditation

Come, my friend, and worship the Lord:  
For He will accept you as you are.

Bring your troubles to Him and confess your sin:  
For the Lord will hear and forgive.

Bring your hopes and dreams and wait on Him:  
For the Lord will bless all faithfulness.

Bring your songs of love, worship, and praise:  
For the Lord will be glorified in heaven.

Bring your ears to hear the Word of God:  
For the Lord will teach You truth.

Bring your prayers for the world, yourself and others:  
For the Lord will give you answers.

Bring your desire to walk in the pathways of peace:  
For the Lord will guide you by His light.

Then go, my friend in love, and worship the Lord:  
For the He will be with you always.

## Bible Study - Genesis 6:11-22

<sup>11</sup> Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and was full of violence; <sup>12</sup> and God saw that the earth was severely damaged, for mortals had ruined their lives on earth. <sup>13</sup> So God said to Noah, 'I have decided to put an end to everyone, for the earth is full of violence because of them. I will definitely destroy them with the earth.

<sup>14</sup> 'Make yourself an ark of cypress; make nesting-pens in the ark, and cover it with pitch inside and out. <sup>15</sup> This is how you are to build it: length, 300 cubits,

width 50 cubits, and height 30 cubits. <sup>16</sup> Make a skylight, and finish the ark a cubit above; and put a door in its side; make it with lower, second, and third decks.

<sup>17</sup> 'As for me, I will bring floodwaters over the earth, to destroy everything alive under heaven which has breath. Everything on earth will perish. <sup>18</sup> But with you I will set up my covenant; you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives will enter the ark. <sup>19</sup> You will bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, that you might keep them alive with you. <sup>20</sup> Of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal, of every kind of ground creature, two must come in with you, to be kept alive. <sup>21</sup> Also take with you all the food to be eaten, and store it away to be used as food for you and for them.' <sup>22</sup> Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

## Review

Now, the story of the great Flood begins in earnest. This passage moves us from a sustained description of the depravity of people (6:1-10) to the plan of God for saving not just men and women, but the whole of His Creation. Noah was the man God decided to use for his plan of salvation, because as it said at the end of yesterday's passage, he was 'a righteous man, blameless in his generations and ... walked with God' (6:9). This simple description saying only a little, but it says enough. This is the first place in the Bible that we read the word 'righteous', meaning that through natural obedience and goodness, God counted Noah as worthy of His care and attention. We should not expect more, or try to make Noah out to be more than a 'good' and therefore Godly man, because at this point in scripture, this is all God needed for the development of His salvation plan. In this sense, Noah has always been regarded as a model 'good person', even in the New Testament (see 1 Peter 3:20, 2 Peter 2:5).

In our passage today, God firstly decided to reveal His salvation plan to Noah, or at least the part of it that affected him (6:11-13). The sins of humanity had reached the point where the earth itself had been corrupted and 'ruined' (6:12), so God told Noah that a work of destruction was necessary (6:13). He did not say how the destruction would take place, and He did not say how he would 'save' Noah, but the whole revelation implies God's concern for him, and it is obvious that He spoke to make it clear that in the circumstances, Noah would have something to do. The underlying design of God was to destroy in order that He could re-create. This is an important theme of scripture, and one that is repeated significantly throughout the Bible, not least in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Noah received instructions for an incredibly large shipbuilding venture, to construct a boat with an estimated 43,000 tons displacement (according to modern calculations based upon the dimensions), which God called an 'Ark'. This word means a storage chest for saving things, and enigmatically, it is the same word used later in Israel's history for the box or chest used to house the Ten Commandments, otherwise known as the 'Ark of the Covenant'! Many of the features of the construction of the boat and all the instructions God gave about its loading (6:17-22) are symbolic, but we should not turn up our noses at the notion of 'symbolic'. The pairs of animals to be rounded up and kept in the ark were symbolic of their species, but through their role in the unfolding drama of God's history they would become the progenitors of their own kind.

It is only in verse 17 that we learn about the plan of God to cover the earth with a Flood that will destroy the whole earth. Two very important features of this passage now become clear. Firstly, what is about to happen on earth is an act of de-creation. As one of His first acts of Creation, God separated the waters in order to make an earth and a heaven where

all things could exist (Gen 1:6,7). Now, however, He decided to destroy a large part of what He had made on earth by a Flood of water (6:17). All living creatures previously created on earth (Gen 1:24ff), would be killed!

Secondly, God began to reveal his plan of salvation not just through the details of the building of the ark. He told Noah to take his whole family on board, together with two of each kind of 'living creature' (6:19), so that they could be saved and because all else would die. This is described in scripture as an act of 'Covenant' faith (6:18) between God and all who entered the ark. This is the first time that a covenant is mentioned in scripture, and in it, God is completely committed to this Covenant promise to save people and the remnants of creation that will be the seed-bed for the new world. The covenant also requires Noah to care for this remnant of creation within the ark, thus fulfilling his duties under Gen. 1:26,28.

This helps us understand the way the writer to the Hebrews describes Noah's actions recorded here in Genesis;

*'By faith Noah, warned by God about events as yet unseen, respected the warning and built an ark to save his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir to the righteousness that is in accordance with faith.'*  
(Hebrews 11:7)

## Questions *(for use in groups)*

1. What mental picture of the Ark did you have before this study, and has this changed by studying the text?
2. What do you know about the meaning of the word 'Covenant' in scripture, and how does this compare with its use here?
3. Is Noah unique in history? Has anyone else been asked to do something unique for the salvation of the world and all things? Who and why?

## Discipleship

### Personal comment:

*Would you or I have the faith to undertake such a work as building the Ark? This is a question many have asked themselves, and there are several ways to respond to it. Firstly, to say that such a task is not relevant because God is not doing such works today, for the history of the world has moved on. Secondly, we can feel inadequate at the prospect of a 'large' task. Thirdly, we can trust God that whatever he calls us to do, small or large, and accept that He will equip us for the task. It is best not to try and pre-judge what God will do, and perhaps that is the starting point for real faith.*

### Ideas for discipleship programme

- *Each of us can only be true to our calling as it has been given to us. I suggest that you take time to prayerfully consider this issue. What is your calling, and are you fulfilling it?*
- *If you have the opportunity, try to speak to people outside of the church about the story of Noah and find out what they think of it. If possible, try to explain the purpose of God to rebuild the earth after the sins of people had destroyed it, and again, see what response you get.*