

## Dr. Kenneth Mathews, Genesis, Session 7, Noah and the Flood, Part 1 (Gen. 6:9-9:29)

### Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

#### 1. Abstract of Mathews, Genesis, Session 7, Noah and the Flood, Part 1 (Gen 6:9-9:29), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. Kenneth Mathews' Genesis session seven** is a lecture focusing on the Noahic flood narrative (Genesis 6:9-9:29). **The lecture examines the flood account's length and detail**, arguing its significance in Genesis's overarching theological message concerning God's plan for humanity. **Mathews explores the flood's literary structure**, highlighting its themes of judgment, mercy, and restoration. **He also compares and contrasts the biblical flood account** with similar narratives from ancient Near Eastern cultures, emphasizing differences in worldview and motivation. Finally, **he analyzes the literary devices** used in the biblical text to demonstrate its unity and God's sovereignty.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mathews, Genesis, Session 7 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Pentateuch → Genesis).**



**Mathews\_Genesis\_  
Session07.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Mathews, Genesis, Session 7, Noah and the Flood, Part 1 (Gen. 6:9-9:29)

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Mathews\_Gen\_EN\_Session07.pdf":

#### Briefing Document: Dr. Kenneth Mathews on Genesis, Session 7 - Noah and the Flood, Part 1

##### I. Overview

- This document summarizes Dr. Kenneth Mathews' lecture on Genesis 6:9-9:29, focusing on the Noah and the Flood narrative (part 1).
- Mathews emphasizes the significance of this extended narrative within Genesis 1-11, arguing it serves as a crucial example of the author's theological message.
- The lecture aims to understand the literary structure and the theological themes within the narrative, as well as contextualize it within ancient Near Eastern (ANE) culture.

##### II. Key Themes and Ideas

###### 1. Theological Significance of the Flood Narrative

- **Example of God's Thesis:** Mathews argues the Flood story is a prime example of the overall narrative of Genesis 1-11, which focuses on God's blessing for humanity and the threats to that blessing.
- **Universal History:** The narrative illustrates God's plan for the human family to fulfill the dominion mandate given in Genesis 1:28.
- **Consequence of Rebellion:** Human wickedness, escalating from the Garden of Eden through Cain's murder of Abel, necessitates God's judgment. The flood is a direct result of "the trajectory and rise of human wickedness that becomes so pervasive and so intense".
- **Merciful Preservation:** Despite judgment, God provides a means of merciful preservation through Noah, ensuring the continuation of His plan of salvation. "God chooses, then, to bring to pass a merciful preservation of the human family that he loves, and whereby he can continue his progressive plan of salvation".

- **Reversal and Restoration:** The narrative depicts God's actions as a reversal of creation (uncreation) followed by a restoration, emphasizing God's control and redemptive purpose. The flood is a type of "uncreation" and subsequent new creation.

## 1. Literary Structure and Arrangement

- **Preparatory Chapters:** Chapters 6 & 7: Commissioning of Noah, building of the ark, and rising of the floodwaters.
- **Peak and Reversal:** The peak being the height of the waters (Mount Ararat), followed by the receding of the waters and drying of the ground.
- **Disembarking and Worship:** The remnant is disembarked and worships God in thanksgiving.
- **Covenant and Renewal:** Chapter 9 focuses on God's covenant with Noah and all creatures, renewing the promises initially given to Adam and Eve.
- **Noah's Drunkenness:** The narrative concludes with the account of Noah's drunkenness and the subsequent curse/blessing he invokes, indicating the story's realistic portrayal of human fallibility. "So, it does not end on a happy note, and it certainly does not begin on a beginning note, but the structure of the story does tell us that God has a plan."
- **Time Span:** The flood event lasted approximately one year.
- **Ark:** Described as a large rectangular barge, around 150 yards long and 25 yards wide with three stories, emphasizing God's sovereign care over Noah's family.

## 1. Ancient Near Eastern Context

- **Israel's World:** The lecture outlines Israel's geographical position between the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations, specifically focusing on the Sumerians, Akkadians, Amorites, Babylonians, and Assyrians.
- **Fertile Crescent:** Ancient Canaan as a bridge within the Fertile Crescent, making it a strategically important area.
- **Dimorphic Lifestyle:** The patriarchs' lifestyle is described as "dimorphic", referring to their dual existence as both shepherds and residents of city-states.
- **Comparison and Contrast:** Mathews stresses the importance of comparing and contrasting biblical narratives with ANE accounts, focusing on *worldviews* rather

than direct borrowing of specific details. He also makes the point that "there is not a necessity to have a direct link, but rather an indirect link between Israel's account of human history and what we find in the other creation accounts and the great flood."

- **Nature Religions:** ANE cultures were primarily characterized by nature religions and polytheism, where gods control aspects of the created order.

## 1. Mythology vs. Biblical Narrative

- **Myth Defined:** Myths are not simply fictional entertainment but were accounts of the gods and their role in creation and the development of social structures.
- **Egyptian Creation Accounts:** Focused on the gods' self-creation (e.g., Atum) and creation through emanations. Atum claims "I am the one who made me. It was as I wished, according to my heart, that I built myself." Ptah is an intellectual principle using magic to create.
- **Mesopotamian Creation (Enuma Elish):** Involved battles between gods (e.g., Marduk vs. Tiamat) where the world was created from a defeated goddess's corpse. Kingship was tied into the divine.
- **Canaanite Creation:** Focus on cosmic battles between gods of chaos (e.g., Yam) and gods of order (e.g., Baal).
- **Contrast with Genesis:** The Genesis account presents a stark contrast, emphasizing God's creation from love and goodness rather than from war or self-generation.

## 1. The Flood Event in the Ancient Near East

- **Epic of Gilgamesh:** Features Utnapishtim, Noah's counterpart, who received immortality. Includes a flood account.
- **Atrahasis:** Explains the flood as a response to humans disturbing the gods' sleep and causing too much noise.
- **Moral Degeneration:** The biblical flood is a response to human moral degeneration, contrasting with ANE accounts that cite divine annoyance. "It is God who creates for the benefit of humanity, and when we find that humanity falls into grave immorality, God must act with the flood."

## 1. Literary Features of the Flood Account

- **Covenant:** Chapter 6 introduces the first use of the word 'covenant' in the Bible (6:18), establishing a relationship between God and Noah's family.
- **Repetition:** The narrative employs repetition of words and numbers (e.g., seven, 40, 150) to emphasize cohesion, symmetry, and God's sovereign control. "its emphasis on the cohesion and symmetry of the flood account."
- **Word Plays:** Connections between names (e.g., Noah and the Hebrew word for "rest", nuach) add depth to the narrative.
- **Echoes of Creation:** The narrative mirrors the themes of creation, uncreation, and recreation, suggesting the continuity of God's plan.
- **Ark as Basket:** The use of the same Hebrew word for "ark" (referring to Noah's ark) and "basket" (referring to the basket for baby Moses) highlights the theme of rescue from water.

## 1. Character of Noah

- **Righteousness:** Noah is described as "a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God."
- **Faith and Obedience:** He is commended for his faith and obedience in building the ark at God's command. "He was a man who by faith built this ark at the instruction of the Lord."

## 1. God's Sovereignty and Hope

- **Superintendent:** The flood account shows God is in charge of human history and is working out his plan. "The message then having to do with Noah and the flood account tells us centrally that when it comes to the family of humanity, God gives the reader hope that God is the one who is superintendent."
- **The Lord Shut the Door:** God's action of closing the door to the ark (7:16) highlights His sovereignty in providing salvation and protection. "Then the Lord shut the door. He's the one who shut Noah and the new world into the safety net of this ark."
- **New Adam:** Noah is seen as a new Adam who will populate the earth anew. "...in Noah, the new Adam from whom will come all people groups."

### III. Conclusion

- Dr. Mathews emphasizes that the Noah and the Flood narrative is central to the theological message of Genesis and that the story highlights God's sovereign control, judgment, mercy, and covenant.
- The narrative is not simply a historical event but is profoundly theological, pointing to God's overarching plan for humanity and its salvation.
- The ANE context provides a helpful backdrop for understanding the unique nature and purpose of the biblical account.
- The lecture sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the narrative in session 8.

This briefing document should provide you with a comprehensive overview of the key points from Dr. Mathews' lecture. Let me know if you have any other questions.

## 4. Study Guide: Mathews, Genesis, Session 7, Noah and the Flood, Part 1 (Gen. 6:9-9:29)

### Genesis: Noah and the Flood, Part 1 Study Guide

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. Why does the author of Genesis devote so much attention to the Noah and Flood episode?
2. What are the primary threats to God's blessing for humanity, according to this passage?
3. How does the intermarriage between the lines of Cain and Seth contribute to the need for the flood?
4. Describe the literary structure of the flood narrative as an "uncreation" and recreation.
5. How does the ark function as both a "prison" and a source of freedom?
6. What is the significance of the Fertile Crescent in relation to Israel and its surrounding cultures?
7. What is the key difference between the creation accounts of ancient Near Eastern cultures and the Genesis account?
8. How do the Mesopotamian flood accounts, like the Epic of Gilgamesh, differ from the Genesis account in their explanation for the flood?
9. What is the significance of the term "covenant" in the Noah narrative?
10. How does the description of Noah as "righteous" and "blameless" underscore the message of the flood account?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The author emphasizes the Noah and Flood episode because it serves as a significant example of God's judgment on pervasive human wickedness and also his merciful plan for the preservation of a righteous lineage. It illustrates the tension between human rebellion and God's ongoing commitment to blessing humanity.

2. The primary threats to God's blessing include rebellion in the Garden of Eden, murder, and the rise of pervasive human wickedness. These actions disrupt God's purposes and necessitate divine judgment, culminating in the flood.
3. The intermarriage between the descendants of Cain and the Sethites blurred the boundaries between the righteous and wicked lineages, resulting in increased pervasive wickedness. This pervasive wickedness is the immediate cause of the judgment of the flood.
4. The flood narrative is structured as a reversal of creation, where the waters overwhelm and "uncreate" what God created in Genesis 1. Then, after the waters recede, God intervenes to "recreate" and renew His covenant with humanity.
5. The ark functions as a "prison" due to its enclosed nature and the duration of the flood, however, it is a source of freedom because it protects Noah's family from the floodwaters and allows them to survive. It provides a refuge and a means of liberation from destruction.
6. The Fertile Crescent, encompassing the Tigris-Euphrates region, Syria-Palestine, and Egypt, is significant as the birthplace of civilization and a land bridge between major powers. Canaan, now Israel, is situated in this location and was a pivotal region in the ancient world.
7. The key difference is that Genesis portrays God as independent from and prior to creation, bringing it into existence by his word. Ancient Near Eastern creation accounts depict gods that are intertwined with creation and often emanate from a pre-existing force, while the God of Genesis is transcendent.
8. The Mesopotamian flood accounts, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, typically attribute the flood to the gods' annoyance with noisy humans, not to moral degeneration as presented in Genesis. The flood is a means to restore peace for the gods rather than a just judgment.
9. In the Noah narrative, the term "covenant" marks the first explicit divine covenant in the Bible, promising God's protection and preservation to Noah's family and ultimately to all of humanity. It establishes a relationship of God's blessing and preservation.
10. Noah's righteousness and blamelessness set him apart from his contemporaries and demonstrate his faith, which is what makes him worthy of God's preservation. It also highlights God's ongoing desire to maintain his progressive plan of salvation through a chosen person.

## Essay Questions

1. Analyze the parallels and differences between the Genesis flood account and the flood stories found in the Epic of Gilgamesh and Atrahasis. Consider the motivations for the flood, the roles of the main characters, and the purpose of each narrative in its respective culture.
2. Discuss the literary devices and structural elements employed in the Genesis flood narrative, including repetitions, word plays, and the creation/uncreation/recreation motif. Explain how these features contribute to the theological message and overall impact of the story.
3. Compare and contrast the creation accounts found in the ancient Near East, focusing on the Egyptian and Mesopotamian mythologies, with the creation account in Genesis 1-2. How does the Genesis account challenge the dominant worldviews of its time, and what does this reveal about the unique perspective of the biblical author?
4. Explore the significance of the concept of "covenant" within the Noah narrative and its connections to subsequent covenants in the Old Testament, such as the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. How does the Noahic covenant establish a foundation for God's relationship with humanity, and what does it teach us about God's character?
5. Evaluate the significance of Noah as a moral figure within the narrative, focusing on his description as "righteous" and "blameless." How does his life serve as an example of faith and obedience in contrast to the pervasive wickedness of his time, and how does he contribute to the overall themes of the book of Genesis?

## Glossary of Key Terms

**Akkadians:** A people group who succeeded the Sumerians in Mesopotamia, contributing to the region's complex cultural history and political landscape.

**Amorites:** Another significant people group in Mesopotamia known for their laws and cultural influence.

**Apsu:** In Mesopotamian mythology, Apsu is the male primeval water, often associated with fresh water.

**Atrahasis:** A Mesopotamian epic that recounts the story of the great flood, providing insights into the gods' motivations and their relationship with humanity.

**Atum:** The creator god in Egyptian mythology, who emerged from the pre-creation waters, the source of all creation.

**Baal:** A prominent Canaanite god associated with rain, fertility, and often portrayed as a rival to the God of Israel.

**Canaan:** The ancient name for the region of Israel, strategically situated between Mesopotamia and Egypt, the setting for many biblical events.

**Covenant:** A formal agreement or relationship between God and his people, characterized by promises and obligations.

**Dimorphic:** A term describing the dual lifestyle of the patriarchs, combining nomadic shepherding with residence in local cities.

**Egypt:** A powerful ancient civilization along the Nile, known for its stability, unique culture, and influence in the ancient Near East.

**El:** The chief god in the Canaanite pantheon, considered the father of the gods, and thus his name is associated with God in the Hebrew Bible.

**Enuma Elish:** The Babylonian creation epic, which describes the formation of the world through a cosmic battle between gods.

**Epic of Gilgamesh:** A Mesopotamian epic that includes a flood narrative, featuring Utnapishtim as a parallel to Noah.

**Fertile Crescent:** The arc-shaped region of fertile land in the Middle East, where early civilizations developed, stretching from Mesopotamia to Egypt.

**Heliopolis:** An ancient Egyptian city known for its worship of Atum, the creator god, and for its prominent temple.

**Hittites:** An ancient people group living in the northeast of the region of Canaan, whose cultural and political presence is noted in the Bible.

**Kingu:** A deity figure in Mesopotamian mythology who was the general of Tiamat's army, and whose blood was used to create humanity.

**Marduk:** The patron deity of Babylon in Mesopotamian mythology who defeated Tiamat and Kingu.

**Memphite Theology:** An Egyptian theological perspective from Memphis, emphasizing the role of the intellectual principle Ptah in creation.

**Mesopotamia:** The ancient land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, often regarded as the cradle of civilization, home to Sumerians, Akkadians, and Babylonians.

**Monad:** A single entity or source, referring to Atum as the origin of all things in Egyptian theology.

**Myth:** In ancient cultures, a myth was not simply a fantasy story but an account describing the gods and their relationship to the created order and to human life.

**Noah:** A righteous figure in the Bible who was chosen by God to survive the great flood and repopulate the earth.

**Nuach:** The Hebrew word for "rest" which is phonetically similar to the name of Noah, which connects Noah to the idea of the ark coming to rest after the flood.

**Ptah:** The intellectual principle in Egyptian Memphite theology, who brought the universe into being using magical speech.

**Re:** The sun god in Egyptian mythology.

**Sethites:** The descendants of Seth, the righteous lineage in Genesis, who are contrasted with the line of Cain.

**Sumerians:** The earliest group of people in Mesopotamia known for developing writing and establishing advanced city-states.

**Theogony:** A term that refers to the generation of the gods, describing their origin and lineage.

**Tiamat:** In Mesopotamian mythology, Tiamat is the female primeval water, often associated with salt water and chaos.

**Utnapishtim:** A Mesopotamian figure in the Epic of Gilgamesh who survived a great flood and was granted immortality by the gods.

**Yam:** The Canaanite and Hebrew word for the waters or the sea, often used to represent chaos and opposition to God.

## 5. FAQs on Mathews, Genesis, Session 7, Noah and the Flood, Part 1 (Gen. 6:9-9:29), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ on the Noah and the Flood Narrative in Genesis

1. **Why does the author of Genesis dedicate so much attention to the Noah and the Flood narrative (Gen. 6-9)?**
2. The extensive attention given to Noah and the Flood in Genesis is because the author views it as a crucial example of his theological thesis about God's blessing for humanity and the challenges to it. It demonstrates how humanity's rebellion and wickedness lead to divine judgment, and yet God's mercy provides a pathway for the continuation of his plan through the preservation of Noah and his family. This narrative exemplifies the cycle of creation, uncreation (through judgment), and recreation, highlighting God's sovereign control and the hope of a new beginning. The flood account serves as a profound illustration of God's response to human sin and His commitment to His ultimate plan of salvation.
3. **How does the intermarriage between the descendants of Cain and Seth contribute to the flood narrative?**
4. The intermarriage between the lineages of Cain (wicked) and Seth (righteous) represents a critical turning point. This transgression of established boundaries resulted in widespread wickedness, marking the culmination of human depravity. It establishes the justification for the severity of the flood, demonstrating that the pervasive sin had become a significant threat to God's purposes for humanity. It highlights the gravity of departing from God's moral ways and underscores the necessity of divine judgment to cleanse the earth from pervasive corruption. It also sets the stage for why Noah stood out in his generation due to his righteousness.

5. **What is the literary structure of the flood narrative, and what does it tell us about the author's intentions?**
6. The literary structure of the flood narrative follows a pattern of creation, uncreation, and recreation. The account begins with God commissioning Noah, building the ark, and the rising of the waters. This reaches a peak before reversing itself as the waters recede, the ground dries, and Noah's family disembarks to worship God. The narrative culminates with God's covenant with Noah and the renewal of promises given to Adam and Eve. The story is structured like an ascent and descent, such as to a mountain peak, emphasizing the theological theme of God's purposeful intervention, judgment, and restoration of the world.
7. **What is the significance of the ark's features and lack of specific human control?**  
The ark is described as a large, three-story rectangular structure, lacking any sails or rudder. This design emphasizes its purpose as a vessel under God's sole guidance. It was a refuge during the flood, providing safety and liberation. Its lack of human control highlights God's providential care, with the emphasis on Him being the "captain" of the vessel. The ark is thus portrayed as a tool of God's preservation, not merely a human creation. This aspect underscores God's sovereignty and his direct involvement in the rescue and future of humanity.
8. **How does the Genesis account differ from other ancient Near Eastern flood myths, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh and Atrahasis?** While the ancient Near Eastern myths share some similarities in the plot of a great flood and the need for a boat, they fundamentally differ in their underlying motivations. In myths like the Epic of Gilgamesh and Atrahasis, the gods send the flood due to the noise and disturbances caused by humans, which troubled their sleep. In contrast, the Genesis account attributes the flood to the moral depravity of humanity, specifically violence and wickedness. In the Bible, God's motive is love and justice, seeking to purge the world of sin and preserve a remnant through Noah, while the Mesopotamian narratives focus on the gods' self-interest and convenience. Additionally, the biblical narrative is linked to a covenant relationship between God and humanity, while Mesopotamian narratives are not.

**9. What is the significance of the covenant God establishes with Noah after the flood?**

10. The covenant God makes with Noah and all creatures is foundational. Unlike a simple transaction, it signifies a renewed relationship. It contains promises of blessing and preservation, assuring that God will not destroy the earth by a flood again. This covenant is the first one recorded in the Bible, setting a template for subsequent covenants with Abraham, Israel, and the promise of the new covenant. It underscores God's steadfast commitment to His creation and the continuation of His redemptive plan. The covenant assures both humanity and animals of security and continued existence in God's creation.

**11. How does the use of repetition and wordplay contribute to the understanding of the Noah and flood narrative?** The repetition of words and numbers (such as sevens, forty days and nights, and 150 days) provides cohesion and symmetry to the flood account. This structure emphasizes that the story is one coherent narrative under God's sovereign control, rather than a patchwork of different sources. Wordplay, such as the connection between the name "Noah" and the Hebrew word for "rest" ("nuach"), and between "ark" and "basket" in the Moses narrative, highlights key theological themes. Such literary devices enrich the narrative and link different parts of the biblical narrative together, enriching the understanding of the story.

**12. How is Noah presented in the Genesis narrative and what does it teach us about God's plans?**

13. Noah is introduced as a righteous and blameless man who walked with God, a stark contrast to the wickedness prevalent in his time. His faithfulness led him to obey God's command to build the ark and preserve his family, as well as the animal kingdom. This demonstrates that in times of pervasive sin and judgment, God provides a way for those who are faithful to continue his purposes. Noah embodies the idea of a new Adam from whom all the people groups of the earth would eventually descend. The portrayal of Noah emphasizes the hope that, even amidst severe judgment, God's plan for humanity will be carried out through those who remain faithful, and that God is actively involved in rescuing and preserving His creation.