

Noah: the man, the ark and the flood.

I have four Bible readings, three of which come from the book of Genesis. We begin in Genesis 6 verse 5:

And the Lord saw¹ that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And the Lord repented² that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him in His heart.³ And the Lord said, 'I will destroy⁴ man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and animals, creeping thing and birds of the heavens, for I repent that I have made them'.

But Noah found grace ('found favour')⁵ in the eyes of the Lord.⁶

These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generations. Noah walked with God. And Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.⁷

The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence ...

And God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before me,⁸ for the earth is filled with violence ... and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood'.⁹

Now we drop down the closing section of chapter 8, breaking in at verse 18:

And Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him.¹⁰ Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and everything that moves on the earth, according to their kinds, went out of the ark.

And Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled the satisfying odour.¹¹ And the Lord said in His heart, 'I will never again¹² curse the ground for man's sake¹³ ... neither will I again destroy every living thing as I have done'.¹⁴

We now move down to chapter 9 verse 20:

And Noah began to be a husbandman (literally, 'a man of the ground'¹⁵), and he planted a vineyard. And he drank of the wine, and was drunk, and was uncovered in his tent.

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father,¹⁶ and told his two brothers outside. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

And Noah awoke from his wine, and learned what his youngest son had done to him.¹⁷

And, finally, we step into the New Testament, to Hebrews chapter 11 verse 7:

By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning things not yet seen, moved with reverential fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, through which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which comes by faith.

As you will have gathered, our subject is ***the life of the man Noah***. And there is certainly no shortage of material for us to consider.

Apart from the sad lapse recorded at the close of Genesis 9, Noah is known only for the all-important role which he played through what we know as 'the Great Flood', the account of which occupies the best part of four chapters of the Book of Genesis – 82 verses to be precise.

On top of which, you will find that Noah is mentioned by name in no less than eight other books of scripture, five of which are in the New Testament.¹⁸ So, as I say, there is no shortage of material to help us in our study.

For our present purpose, I want to structure my comments around three simple Biblical expressions which we have just read. First, that Noah '***prepared an ark***';¹⁹ second, that Noah '***built an altar***';²⁰ and third, that Noah '***planted a vineyard***'.²¹

1. Noah 'prepared an ark'.²²

Just to give you some feel for how far back in time he lived, Noah's grandfather Methusaleh²³ was contemporary with Adam for almost 250 years, and Noah's father Lamech²⁴ was himself well over 50 years of age when Adam died.²⁵

In every way, Noah was an exceptional man. As we read, (i) he was righteous before God,²⁶ (ii) he was blameless before his contemporaries (which is how I understand the expression 'in his generations'), and (iii) he walked in the steps of his great-grandfather Enoch,²⁷ who, many years before Noah, had '*walked with God*'.²⁸

First, Noah was '**righteous in his works**'. This was, as I said, '*before God*', for that is how God Himself both spoke of him and to him.²⁹

Indeed, we find that in later days his righteousness became proverbial.

The prophet Ezekiel was among the early Jewish captives taken to Babylon. It was there that the word of the Lord came to him, telling him (i) that, on account of its corrupt moral and religious life, the nation of Judah was soon to be totally crushed by the Babylonians, and (ii) that Jerusalem and its temple would be destroyed.

As in the days of Noah, the wickedness of the people was so great³⁰ that nothing could turn aside God's anger. And the Lord therefore made it clear to Ezekiel that, when He did 'stretch out' His hand against the land in judgment, 'even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness'.³¹ Noah then was ranked alongside Job and Daniel in terms of personal righteousness.³²

Without any doubt, Noah practised and lived out that which he preached!³³

Second, Noah was '**blameless in his ways**'. The root idea behind the word 'blameless' is that of wholeness or completeness. In almost half of its ninety or so occurrences in the Old Testament it is used to describe animal sacrifices, when it is invariably translated 'without blemish'.³⁴ When used of a man, it indicates that he is upright, genuine and sincere; in a word, 'blameless'.

Third, Noah was '**godly in his walk**'. Just as Enoch before him, Noah 'walked' in close fellowship 'with God', lived, that is, a life of sustained communion with God.³⁵ The expression points to that which was steadfast and persevering, not that which was intermittent and fluctuating. So that now, in Noah (as earlier in Enoch), God found someone to walk with, as once He had with Adam and Eve before their sin had disrupted that communion.³⁶

And Noah's righteous, blameless and godly life was all the more impressive because of the appalling moral conditions which prevailed in his day.³⁷

For the people of Noah's day were notoriously sinful,³⁸ with their wickedness being (i) deep-seated,³⁹ (ii) all-embracing,⁴⁰ and (iii) incessant.⁴¹

We read, back at the end of chapter 1, that 'God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good'.⁴² Now, we read that He 'saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth', and that when He 'looked on the earth ... behold, (not 'it was very good' but) it was corrupt'.⁴³

The mandate which God had originally given Adam and Eve had been to 'fill the earth' (to fill it with offspring, that is⁴⁴), but mankind had filled it rather 'with violence'.⁴⁵

And, running parallel with their advancing civilization,⁴⁶ Noah's contemporaries were unconcerned about spiritual matters, preoccupied and absorbed with the things of the world, and therefore caught totally unawares by God's judgement.⁴⁷

And given the depraved and degraded society at the time, apart from his immediate family, Noah necessarily stood alone. One American poet and philosopher once wrote, 'If I seem to walk out of step with others, it is because I am listening to another drum beat'.⁴⁸ And Noah could certainly have said that!

It could not have been easy for him, but, in spite of all the enormous moral pressures, he set his face against the whole current of public opinion and conduct, and proved that it is possible (in New Testament language) to live 'blamelessly' and 'without blemish' in the midst of 'a crooked (a 'warped') and perverted generation'.⁴⁹ And we remember that Noah was a family man,⁵⁰ with all the responsibilities and challenges which that entailed.

I wouldn't want to base too much on it, but I note that the expression, 'Noah found grace ('found favour') in the eyes of the Lord',⁵¹ comes before any mention of his holy living, *possibly* suggesting that it was *God's grace* and not *Noah's graces* which accounted for God's blessing upon him. If this is what our passage is saying, then, with our eyes on the prevailing sinfulness of the time, we could well apply to our section the words of the apostle Paul, 'where sin abounded, grace *super-abounded*'.⁵²

But, in any case, we do know that, although doubtless Noah *didn't* find any 'favour' in the eyes of society around him, he most certainly *did* in the Lord's eyes.

And we know too that, although Genesis makes no mention of it, *faith* was the mainspring and motivating force of his life. The writer to the Hebrews makes it clear that it was, as strengthened and fortified by his faith, that Noah accomplished all he did.⁵³

In a handful of words, the writer to the Hebrews directs us: (i) to the ground of his faith, (ii) to the object of his faith, (iii) to the character of his faith, (iv) to the evidence of his faith, and (v) to the outcome of his faith.

(i) The ground of his faith was God's word. 'Being warned by God', we read, the details of which are reported in the closing section of Genesis 6.⁵⁴

(ii) The object of his faith was, as the writer expresses it, 'things not yet seen', a reference, no doubt, to the watery judgment of the flood.

Genesis 2 had explicitly stated that, at the beginning, 'the Lord God had not caused it *to rain* on the earth ... and a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground'.⁵⁵ There were then no visible signs of even light rain, let alone, as God announced, 'a *flood of waters* upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life'.⁵⁶ But then, as the writer said in the opening verse of the chapter, 'faith is ... the conviction of things not seen'.⁵⁷ Faith, that is, visualises that which is not yet seen; faith lays hold on those things which are, as of now, invisible realities. And so it was that in faith Noah built his floating zoo without one cloud on the horizon.

(iii) The character of his faith was shown in that it prompted and motivated Noah to act (not in slavish fear, but) in godly and reverent fear (*εὐλαβεομι*).

(iv) The evidence of his faith was provided by his 'preparing' ('building and equipping') the ark. For, truly, 'faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead'.⁵⁸ And we note that, throughout the construction period and after, Noah was marked by unquestioning and unqualified obedience to all of God's instructions.⁵⁹

And **(v) the outcome** (the result) of his faith was threefold: (a) he and his family were 'saved'; (b) the ark he prepared heralded the condemnation of 'the world of the ungodly'⁶⁰ to destruction, serving as a silent rebuke to the sinful lifestyle of those around him; and (c) he became the possessor of that righteousness before God which comes by faith.

Let us now consider in a little more detail that expression from Hebrews 11 which provides me with my first heading; namely, that Noah '**prepared an ark**'.⁶¹

Probably the first, and most obvious, thing to say is that the construction of this huge barge-like structure was a staggering undertaking.

I have read that somebody once asked G. K. Chesterton, 'If you were stranded on a desert island and could have only a single book, which would you choose?' Given Chesterton's reputation as a Christian writer, everyone expected him to respond, 'a Bible'. But they were wrong. Quickly he replied, 'Thomas' Guide to Practical Shipbuilding'.⁶²

But Noah had *far better* shipbuilding plans than could be found in that volume!

I understand that a sea vessel of the dimensions described would have been extremely stable and almost impossible to capsize. Added to which, the existence of the floor timbers for the three storeys,⁶³ and the walls for the many 'rooms' (lit. 'nests'; that is, cubicles or compartments),⁶⁴ would have served to strengthen and brace the ark for the unprecedented tempestuous weather conditions ahead.

But then, what do you expect? After all, in terms of the ark's (i) dimensions, (ii) structure and (iii) material, everything was prescribed for him by the omniscient and all-wise God.

All Noah had to do was to *build* it! That's all !!!

I was interested to find that, apart from the 26 times where the word translated 'ark' occurs in Genesis 6 to 9, it is found in only one other passage in the Old Testament. This is in Exodus 2, where it refers to the basket of bulrushes in which baby Moses was hidden by his mother.⁶⁵ We read there that, 'she (the mother of Moses) took *an ark* of bulrushes for him, daubed it with bitumen and pitch, put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river's bank'.

Interestingly, both of these 'arks' were daubed with pitch to seal them from water seeping in, and both 'arks' saved from drowning a male⁶⁶ who was destined to bring salvation and deliverance to others. I note that, with *his*

'ark', Noah was instructed to cover, not only the outside, but the inside also, 'with pitch', possibly to keep some of the passengers from nibbling away at the walls!

No doubt the small hand-basket 'ark' used by Jochebed,⁶⁷ the mother of Moses, could be obtained easily and readymade in ancient Egypt. But, alas for Noah, an ark of the size which God required certainly did not come readymade, nor indeed was it easy to come by!

A few moments ago, I described the 'ark' as a huge barge-like structure.⁶⁸ And so it was. For this vessel boasted no mast, no sail, and no rudder, and, given that it later 'came to rest on the mountains of Ararat',⁶⁹ its bottom was clearly more-or-less flat and nothing like the hull of a ship. But then this vessel was designed for floating, not for navigation!

If we take, as seems reasonable, a cubit to be about 18 inches⁷⁰, the ark was, in effect, a huge box, measuring some 450 feet long, 75 feet broad, and 45 feet deep.⁷¹ Its surface area measured about three times that of the courtyard of the Tabernacle.⁷²

Not that we are compelled to believe that Noah and his sons (and possibly their wives!) built the ark all on their own ... any more than we are compelled to believe that Bezaleel built the Tabernacle by himself,⁷³ or that Solomon built the First Temple all on his own⁷⁴ (even though some verses might suggest just such nonsense if we didn't know otherwise).

Personally, I can see no reason why 'Noah and Sons' should not have sub-contracted much of the work to others, who, in turn, would have been able to take full advantage of the iron tools invented by Tubal-Cain many years before.⁷⁵

And yet, even so, it was a massive enterprise. It was a simply incredible engineering feat.

But *how long*, do you think, did it take Noah and his fellow-workers to construct the ark? Well, I can't tell you precisely, but I know that it was certainly nowhere near, as is often claimed, 120 years.

We need to note that, however we are to understand the '120 years' mentioned in verse 3 of chapter 6 (whether (i) in terms of a planned reduction in man's lifespan [which I favour⁷⁶], or (ii) in terms of the interval before the flood would come), *God's word about man's 'days' being 120 years precedes by far the very first thing He is recorded as having said to Noah.*

The mention of the '120 years' comes rather as His response to the intermarriage between the 'sons of God' and the 'daughters of men'⁷⁷ Suffice it to say, that the '120 years' of Genesis 6. 3 have absolutely nothing to do with the length of time taken to build the ark.

Well, what do we know? The three key facts can be simply stated.

First, we are told that Noah was 500 years old when he fathered his first son,⁷⁸ who we can identify as Japheth, followed about two years later by Noah's second son, Shem,⁷⁹ and sometime later again by Ham.⁸⁰

Second, we know that, when God first spoke to Noah about the forthcoming judgement and told him to build the ark, Noah not only had three sons, but that all three were themselves already married⁸¹ (although, as yet, not one of the three had fathered any offspring.⁸²)

We learn from the genealogy in chapter 5 that, in those days, the very youngest age at which a man fathered his first son was 65 years.⁸³ We must conclude therefore that Noah's three sons were each somewhere in their sixties or seventies when God revealed to Noah the details of the coming judgment, and that he, Noah, must then have been around 560 or 570 years of age.

Third, scripture makes it clear more than once that the flood commenced when Noah was 600 years old,⁸⁴

It follows then, arithmetically, that the length of time during which Noah 'prepared' the ark amounted to some 30 or 40 years,⁸⁵ and that this was the duration when 'the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared'.⁸⁶

What a contrast between the 30 or 40 years that 'the longsuffering of God' then waited, and the already almost 2,000 years in this, the church age.⁸⁷

In God's very *first* recorded message to Noah, He issued him with his rather daunting passenger list.⁸⁸

The fact that, when God *next* spoke to Noah, He gave him a full week's notice of the imminent downpour,⁸⁹ suggests that, given the size of Noah's 'passenger list', boarding was going to take some time – the more so because the patriarch was then given an extended passenger list!⁹⁰

But, thankfully from Noah's point of view, *boarding* the ark would prove much easier than *building* it!

And no doubt also to Noah's relief, whereas he was told to 'gather' to himself 'every sort of food that is eaten'⁹¹ ('food', that is, of course, exclusively of a vegetarian nature⁹²), he learned that he would not have to round up (still less to capture) any of his fellow-passengers!

For God assured him that they would 'come to him' spontaneously of their own accord.⁹³

It must have been a truly amazing sight: a seemingly endless stream of animals and birds of all shapes and sizes, from far and near, and all converging on the single door which, according to God's specification, Noah had set in the side of the ark.⁹⁴

'Converging', did I say? Led there, rather, we can safely take it, by the very same divine hand:

- (i) which would one day direct two milch cows to bring back a very different kind of ark out of the land of the Philistines;⁹⁵
- (ii) which would direct ravens, not to leave an ark (as Noah's raven did⁹⁶), but to nourish an obedient prophet;⁹⁷
- (iii) which would direct a lion to meet, to tear, and to kill – but not devour – a disobedient prophet;⁹⁸
- (iv) which would direct two she bears to deal with a group of mocking youths;⁹⁹
- (v) which would direct hungry lions to leave unharmed God's 80-year old servant;¹⁰⁰
- (vi) which would direct a great fish in the Mediterranean Sea to provide three days' free hospitality for a reluctant preacher;¹⁰¹ and
- (vii) which would one day direct a much smaller fish in the Sea of Galilee (a) to collect a coin of sufficient value to pay the temple tribute for His Son and for one of His Son's disciples, and then (b) to come in to the shore at the right moment to connect with Peter's shiny hook.¹⁰²

No indeed, the Lord God had no problem in bringing (perhaps, for all I know, by some form of migratory instinct¹⁰³) the right number of each kind of animal and bird right up to and then into the ark's open door.

It has been estimated that the capacity of the ark would have been more than adequate to accommodate all the animals required. Indeed, it has been calculated that, assuming that Noah took representatives of each 'kind' with him, the space required would have been in the region of no more than half the total available.¹⁰⁴

And then, when all were safely aboard and settled in, God took care of the one thing which Noah could not; 'the Lord shut him in',¹⁰⁵ thereby ensuring that there was not even the smallest gap through which even one drop of water might seep into the ark.¹⁰⁶

For it was the very same hand which would open the windows of heaven¹⁰⁷ which first shut the door of the ark. Noah's floating zoo didn't boast any water pumps or lifeboats, but then it wouldn't need any!

The forty days and nights of torrential rain¹⁰⁸ were followed by a further 110 days when the waters continued to 'prevail', totalling 150 days in all¹⁰⁹ (five months as reckoned by scripture.¹¹⁰)

And I note that the word 'prevail' which occurs four times in this section¹¹¹ is a military word for success in battle.¹¹² The waters, that is, 'triumphed over' the world.¹¹³ In the words of the apostle Peter, 'the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished'.¹¹⁴

By my reckoning, according to Genesis 7 and 8 (which I have seen 'likened to a sea captain's log-book'¹¹⁵), the time from when (i) 'the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened' until the time when (ii) God told Noah and his family to leave the ark and to step out onto dry ground¹¹⁶ was 371 days in all.¹¹⁷

I hope you noted those words, '*Until the time when God told Noah and his family to leave the ark*'.

For, even when, courtesy of services rendered by his dove,¹¹⁸ Noah knew that the waters had receded, he waited for almost a whole month before removing the ark's covering that he might have a good look around.

And then when he saw that 'behold, the surface of the ground was dry'¹¹⁹ ... he still waited!

Noah made no move to leave the ark until, almost two months later again, he heard that familiar, and doubtless very welcome, voice ... when 'God spoke to Noah, saying, "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons

and your sons' wives with you". Only then, at God's specific command, did Noah venture out from the ark which long before, also at God's specific command, he had 'prepared'.¹²⁰

Clearly he believed that God knew best and trusted Him to release him and his passengers at the first suitable moment. And he was, of course, right. For when it says that 'in the 27th day of the second month the earth was dried',¹²¹ the word translated 'dried' indicates fully dried, 'dried out',¹²² unlike that which tells us that back on that New Year's Day 'the surface of the ground was dry',¹²³ when, though no longer covered by any depth of water, it would inevitably have still been very wet and muddy.

At the outset, I said that I wanted to structure my comments around *three* expressions ... that Noah 'prepared an ark',¹²⁴ that Noah 'built an altar',¹²⁵ and that Noah 'planted a vineyard'.¹²⁶ Well, we have looked at the first expression, so let me comment briefly on the other two.

2. Noah 'built an altar'.¹²⁷

Not only is this the first altar *specifically* mentioned in scripture (although, of necessity Abel must have had one¹²⁸), but the impression given by the text is that building this altar was Noah's very first action when he stepped out onto the 'new' earth. The man certainly had his priority right. For, before ever he set about building a dwelling to accommodate himself and his family, he set about building an altar 'to the Lord', upon which he proceeded to offer 'burnt offerings' of every type of clean animal and clean bird.¹²⁹

As we noted earlier, the good man had consistently done everything which he did in strict obedience to God's commands and instructions, right down to the timing of his exit from the ark.¹³⁰

Earlier, before the flood, the Lord had told him to 'make an ark' for himself,¹³¹ but now, after the flood, the Lord has said nothing to Noah about building an altar. Noah's action now is performed entirely on his own initiative.

And now we can understand why, when the Lord had summoned Noah to enter the ark, He (the Lord) had specified that Noah should give boarding passes, not to *one pair* of clean animals and birds (as was the case with their unclean co-passengers), but, in their case, to *seven pairs*.¹³²

For, had the Lord not told Noah to do so, or if Noah had not obeyed God's command (for which God gave him no explanation¹³³), and had Noah then ventured to offer any clean animals or birds in sacrifice, that particular species would have immediately become extinct.¹³⁴

And so, the man (i) who has walked with God,¹³⁵ (ii) who has worked for God,¹³⁶ (iii) who has witnessed for God,¹³⁷ and (iv) who has waited for God,¹³⁸ is now seen (v) to worship before God.¹³⁹

And God responded to Noah's free-will and acceptable¹⁴⁰ offering by (a) resolving¹⁴¹ (and, indeed, by reinforcing that resolve with a covenant¹⁴² and an oath¹⁴³) that there would be no repeat performance of the world-wide flood, and (b) by giving to Noah and his descendants both His permission for them to eat animal flesh,¹⁴⁴ and His delegated responsibility to henceforth governing themselves.¹⁴⁵

According to the first verse of chapter 9, 'God blessed Noah and his sons'. In a sense, such 'blessing' was something new. Earlier, He had blessed Adam and Eve when in innocence,¹⁴⁶ and He had blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.¹⁴⁷ But this was the first time that we read of when God bestowed His blessing on a sinful creature, and he did so only after Noah had first taken clean beasts and fowls, and had offered them in sacrifice to Him.

Thinking of God's unilateral covenant with mankind and with every living creature that 'never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth',¹⁴⁸ I am reminded of an incident I read about in the life of Mark Twain.

Apparently, as Mark Twain and his good friend, the writer William Dean Howells, were leaving church together one Sunday, it started to rain heavily. Mr Howells looked up at the clouds and said, "Do you think it will stop?" "It always has", Mr Twain replied.¹⁴⁹

Yes, indeed, 'it always has'. And if you don't know why, just look for the rainbow!¹⁵⁰

And today, just as the fossils in the sedimentary rocks witness to the great Flood of the past, so the rainbow in the cloud witnesses to the fact that there will never be another!

Yes, Noah 'prepared an ark', and Noah 'built an altar', but, finally (and very, very briefly):

3. Noah 'planted a vineyard'.¹⁵¹

And I find it desperately sad that one who had just been taught the principle of human government by God Himself¹⁵² should, so soon and so conspicuously, fail to govern *himself*.

In the time available, I want to leave you with just four simple practical points.

First, that Noah's experience of salvation had not removed or improved his sin nature. To put it bluntly, *he took his sinful nature into the ark, and he brought his sinful nature back out with him*. And many of us have proved in experience the truth of Paul's words in Romans 7, 'I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells nothing good'.¹⁵³

And we do well to note that Noah wasn't preserved from falling, either by his age, or by his past track record of spirituality. It is frightening to realise that this righteous, and (once) blameless, man, who had walked with God for hundreds of years, and who had withstood enormous peer pressure, should then, in an unguarded moment, fall victim to drink, and seriously disgrace himself in his tent. Well indeed does the apostle Paul exhort us, 'Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall'.¹⁵⁴

Second, that Noah needed no *external* temptation or tempter. Foolishly, he created his own temptation.

Adam and Eve had also failed in connection with the fruit of a tree. But, in the case of *their* fall, the great Arch-Tempter himself played no small part. But, with my eye on a verse in James 1, I think we have to say that Noah was 'tempted' when he was 'drawn away and enticed' by his own sinful desire.¹⁵⁵ And I suspect that many of us know more about that than we should like to admit.

Third, I cannot help observing that the first reference in scripture to wine is found in the context of drunkenness.¹⁵⁶

And, fourth, I note the very different actions (and reactions) of Noah's three sons.

The one son, Ham, we read, 'told' his brethren about his father's failure and shame,¹⁵⁷ whereas the other two sons, Shem and Japheth, worked together to 'cover' the evidence of their father's sinful lapse.

And I can't avoid the obvious (not to say, pointed) question: How do *I* respond to the perceived faults of others? Am I never found guilty of publicizing the sins and weaknesses of other believers ... of, in effect, rejoicing 'at iniquity'?¹⁵⁸

It has been well said that love doesn't *cleanse* sins, nor does love *condone* sins, but it does (or it should) *cover* sins.¹⁵⁹

I close by quoting familiar words from the apostle Paul's letter to Titus:

'The grace of God, which brings salvation to all men, has appeared, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live self-controlled, righteous, and godly lives in the present age'.¹⁶⁰

Noah certainly found 'grace' in the eyes of the Lord.¹⁶¹ Noah certainly experienced God's salvation.¹⁶² Noah certainly excelled in both righteousness and godliness. But, alas, Noah fell down very badly in self-control.

Let us, who by God's grace have experienced God's salvation, determine to *emulate* Noah in terms of his righteousness and godliness, but to *distance ourselves* from him in terms of his lack of self-control.

Notes

¹ 'The word "saw" does not denote sudden perception but the consideration of a state of affairs that had long been in existence, and on account of which a decision has to be taken. Compare Gen. 30. 1: "When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children", etc.; Gen. 30. 9: "When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children", etc.; Gen. 50. 15: "When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead", etc.; and so forth', Umberto Cassuto, '*Genesis Part 1*', page 302.

² "Regret" or "repent" may suggest a mere change of attitude, but when God "repents", He starts to act differently. Here and in 1 Sam. 15. 11 and Jer. 18. 10 he regrets some good thing He has done for his people, whereas in Exod. 32. 12, 14; 2 Sam. 24. 16; Amos 7. 3, 6 He repents of some evil He is carrying out. That God should change His mind might lead to his being accused of capriciousness, which Scripture firmly denies: "God is not a son of man that he should repent" (Num. 23. 19; cf. 1 Sam. 15. 29) ... divine *repentance* is a response to man's changes of heart, whether for better or worse', Gordon J Wenham, '*Genesis 1-15, Word Biblical Commentary*', page 144.

³ Contrast 'the Lord said *in His heart*, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake"', Gen. 8. 22.

⁴ God used two graphic words to tell Noah of the pending destruction of the earth. The first means 'to corrupt, spoil, bring to ruin'; Gen. 6. 15, 17; 9. 11, 15 (translated 'corrupt' in Gen. 6. 11, 12). The second means 'to wipe out, to blot out', Gen. 6. 7; 7. 4, 23 (occurring in Exod. 32. 32, 35; Isa. 44. 22).

"I will wipe out" (מחה) is used of erasing names from records (e.g., Exod. 17. 14; 32. 32-33) and wiping plates (2 Kings 21. 13)', Wenham, *ibid.*, page 145.

⁵ Cf. 'the Lord said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have *found favour* in my sight', Exod. 33. 17.

'This precious word "grace" is seen for the first time ... when the sin of the creature had reached its climax', A. W. Pink, '*Gleanings in Genesis*', page 82.

⁶ When beholding the wicked we read only that God "saw" but when Noah is in view the "eyes of the Lord" are mentioned. Genesis 6. 5-8 'acts like a trailer to the Flood story', Wenham, *op.cit.*, page 136.

⁷ 'The mention of three sons leads to the expectation, that whereas hitherto the line has been perpetuated through one member alone, in the future each of the three sons will form a new beginning (Gen. 9. 18-19; Gen. 10. 1)', M. Baumgarten, quoted in Keil and Delitzsch.

Compare the mention of three sons born to Lamech, the last name in the Cainite genealogy (Gen.4. 20-24). Ezekiel says that Noah, Daniel, and Job would only deliver themselves in an evil generation by their own righteousness and would not have saved their children, Ezek. 14. 14-20. As Ezekiel must have known of Noah's sons surviving, I assume he must have believed they were righteous (including Ham!).

⁸ 'The phrasing of the divine decree "The end of all flesh has been determined by me" (literally, "come before me"), suggests its irrevocability. The issue has been brought before the divine king and he has decided to act (cf. Esther 9. 11)', Wenham, *op.cit.*, page 172.

⁹ Gen 6. 5-14a. God commands Noah to make himself an ark, although it is only later, in verses 17-21, that He tells him that it is by water that He will destroy all flesh.

God is author of the Flood. Compare 'The Lord sits upon the flood; yea, the Lord sits King for ever', Psa. 29. 10, where David uses the same Hebrew word for 'flood' as is used twelve times of the great Flood in Genesis 6 to 11. It occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament and clearly refers on each occasion to the universal deluge in the days of Noah. In that Psalm, David refers to the 'voice of the Lord' seven times; e.g. 'the voice of the Lord is upon the waters', v. 5.

Similarly, the New Testament uses a special word (from which we get our word 'cataclysm') to describe the Flood, Matt. 24. 58; Luke 17. 27; 2 Pet. 2. 5. This then is clearly a unique Flood.

In God's time, the Flood came, by means of the meeting again of the waters which were divided during Creation Week, Gen. 1. 6-8; 7. 11. The subterranean caverns and reservoirs burst, and the water vapour canopy above the earth condensed.

¹⁰ Compare chapter 7 verse 1, 'And the Lord said to Noah, "*Come into the ark*, you and all your household ..."', with chapter 8 verse 15, 'And God spoke to Noah, saying, "*Go out of the ark*, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you"'.

¹¹ Literally, 'an odour of satisfaction', from the Hebrew word *nuach*, to rest, a possible allusion to Noah's name. That God's anger at sin is appeased by sacrifice is the clear implication of this phrase.

¹² God was not lifting the curse on the ground pronounced in Gen. 3. 17 as a result of man's disobedience; He was promising not to add to it.

¹³ 'For (not 'even though') the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth'. God acknowledges that the human condition that will not be remedied by this judgement. The Flood had not changed man's heart. So to visit the same judgement again will not solve the problem.

¹⁴ Gen. 8. 18-21.

¹⁵ It seems that his father Lamech had also been 'a man of the ground' (a farmer perhaps), Gen. 5. 28-29.

¹⁶ Cf. 'Woe to him that gives his neighbour to drink the thick lees of wine, and intoxicates him, that he may *look* upon their secret parts', Hab. 2. 15 Greek Old Testament. I see nothing in the narrative to suggest that Ham went further than looking. To me any suggestion of sexual abuse is ruled out by the 'remedy' provided by Shem and

Japheth. How, I ask, could throwing the garment over Noah without looking undo such a vile deed and merit his blessing?

'If the covering was an adequate remedy, it follows that the misdemeanour was confined to seeing', Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part 2*, page 151.

What Ham is said to have done is very different to the idiom used for sexual violation, "to *uncover* the nakedness". It is this latter construction which is used throughout Leviticus 18 and 20 to describe the vile sexual conduct of the Canaanites.

'It is difficult for someone living in the modern world to understand the modesty and discretion of privacy called for in ancient morality. Nakedness in the Old Testament was from the beginning a thing of shame for fallen man. As a result of the Fall, the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened, and, knowing they were naked, they covered themselves', Allen P. Ross, *The Curse of Canaan*, Bibliotheca Sacra—Vol. 137—July 1980—page 230.

¹⁷ Gen. 9. 20-24. Being enslaved by their vices, the Canaanites were to be enslaved by others.

¹⁸ 1 Chron. 1. 4; Isa. 54. 9; Ezek. 14. 14, 20 (but see too verses 16 and 18); Matt. 24. 37-38; Luke 3. 36; 17. 26-27; Heb. 11. 7; 1 Pet. 3. 20; 2 Pet. 2. 5.

¹⁹ Heb. 11. 7.

²⁰ Gen. 8. 20.

²¹ Gen. 9. 20.

²² The word translated 'prepared' is the same as in Mark 1. 2.

²³ It is sometimes suggested (e.g. Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*, pages 159-160; A. W. Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis*, page 78), that the meaning of the name 'Methuselah' may be, *'When he dies, it shall be sent'*, a clear reference to the Flood.

'The name Methuselah could mean one of two things. Therefore, it will either mean "man of the spear" or "when he dies it shall be sent". The debate is not over the second part of the word which, in Hebrew, is *shalach*; and *shalach* means "to send". While the concept of sending is the primary meaning of *shalach*, it has a secondary meaning of being thrown or cast forth in a context where the sending is with heavy force or speed. On that basis, some would conclude that *shalach* would mean either "missile" or "dart" or "spear". However, that is a derived meaning because the primary meaning of *shalach* is "to send", as any lexicon shows. Ultimately, how one deals with *shalach* depends on how you deal with the first part of the word, which has the two Hebrew letters spelling *mat*. Based upon the root, then the meaning would indeed be "man". Hence, commentaries conclude that it means "man of the spear" or "man of the dart". However, the use of the term "spear" or "dart" is not the meaning of *shalach* in any lexicon that I know of. It is simply a derived meaning going from sending to throwing to trying to make a specific object. If *mat* was intended to mean man, if one was to keep it strictly literal, it would not mean "man of the spear" or "man of the dart", but "a man—sent". The second option for *mat* is that it comes from the root that means "to die". Furthermore, the letter "va" between *mat* and *shalach* gives it a verbal force. That is why I prefer to take it strictly literally, using the root "to die" and literally it would mean "he dies it shall be sent". I prefer that translation of the name, "when he dies it shall be sent", for two reasons. The first reason is that I find it fitting the Hebrew parsing of the name much better. Secondly, it is better in the wider context since, if we follow the chronology of Genesis, the same year he died was the year of the Flood. I do not think this was purely coincidental', Dr. Arnold. G. Fruchtenbaum, personal communication to J. Sarfati, 7 November 2000, cited in *Refuting Compromise*, pages 29–95 – accessed at <http://creation.com/methuselah-and-the-ark-dirt-and-supergerms>.

If this meaning is correct, it is a most impressive demonstration of God's long-suffering, in that the man whose life was the measure of the ancient world's probation, was permitted to live *longer than anyone else!*

²⁴ That Lamech was a man of faith is evident from the fact that he attributed his 'toil' and the condition of the ground to the Lord's 'curse', Gen. 5. 29. It may be that God had revealed to him something of His future purposes in that Lamech looked on his son as one that was to bring 'comfort' or 'rest'.

²⁵ This assumes that the genealogy of Genesis 5 is complete.

²⁶ Gen. 7. 1; cf. Ezek. 14. 14, 20 (together with verses 16 and 18); Heb. 11. 7; 2 Pet. 2. 5.

²⁷ The *third* man mentioned in Hebrews 11 was righteous like the *first* man, v. 4, and godly like the *second* man, v. 5.

²⁸ Gen. 6. 9; cf. Gen. 5. 24. Scripture speaks also of the believer walking (a) '*before*' the Lord in uprightness and sincerity, Gen. 17. 1, (b) '*after*' the Lord in obedience and service, Deut. 13. 4; Hos. 11. 10, and (c) '*in*' the Lord in union and dependence, Col. 2. 6.

²⁹ Gen. 7. 1. Cf. Luke 1. 6.

³⁰ Cf. Ezek. 8–11.

³¹ Ezek. 14. 14; cf. vv. 16, 18, 20.

³² God had once told Abraham that He would have spared Sodom if He had found only ten righteous people there, Gen. 18. 33, But He would not now spare Jerusalem if three of the most righteous people in history were there.

³³ 2 Pet. 2. 5.

³⁴ In 44 of its 91 occurrences. It is first translated 'without blemish' in Exod. 12. 5, and is last so translated in Ezek. 46. 13. (Interestingly, both these verses speak of 'a lamb of the first year').

³⁵ Yet it seems that Enoch's conversion came when he was 65 years old at the time of the birth of his first son, Methuselah, Gen. 5. 21-22. Previous to that event, it is said (as is said of all others in the chapter) that he simply

'lived', but we are told that it was from that time on (and unlike the others), he 'walked with God'. There was no known point at which Noah began to walk with God.

³⁶ Gen. 3. 8, with verse 24.

³⁷ The contrast between the prevailing sinfulness around in verse 5 and the character of Noah in verse 9 is most striking. Noah's character stands out even more brightly against the darkness of the rest of mankind.

³⁸ Gen. 6. 5.

³⁹ 'Intention of the thoughts of his heart'.

⁴⁰ 'Only evil'; literally, 'nothing but evil'.

⁴¹ 'Continually; literally, 'all the day'.

⁴² Gen. 1. 31. The deliberate echo of this verse heightens the sense of the tragedy which had overtaken the world since its creation.

⁴³ Gen. 6. 5, 12.

⁴⁴ Gen. 1. 28.

⁴⁵ Gen. 6. 11.

⁴⁶ Gen. 4. 17-22.

⁴⁷ Matt. 24. 37-39; Luke 17. 26-27.

⁴⁸ Henry David Thoreau (1817-62).

⁴⁹ Phil 2. 15.

⁵⁰ Gen. 6. 10.

⁵¹ Gen. 6. 8.

⁵² Rom. 5. 20 English Majority Text Version.

⁵³ Heb. 11. 7.

⁵⁴ Gen. 6. 13-14a, 17. God's first recorded message to Noah (in verses 13-21) alerted Noah to His decision, on account of man's gross wickedness, to destroy the human race, Gen. 6. 7. Having decided, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth', the Lord made this known to Noah. This is the first of seven occasions when we are explicitly told that God spoke to Noah; cf. Gen. 7. 1; 8. 15; 9. 1, 8, 12, 17.

⁵⁵ Gen. 2. 5-6.

⁵⁶ Gen. 6. 17.

⁵⁷ Heb. 11. 1.

⁵⁸ James 2. 17. Throughout Hebrews 11, the believer's faith was demonstrated by his or her works.

⁵⁹ Gen. 6. 22; 7. 5, 16. Also Gen. 7. 1 with 7. 7; and Gen. 8. 16 with 8. 18.

⁶⁰ 2 Pet. 2. 5.

⁶¹ The word translated 'prepared' is the same as in Mark 1. 2.

⁶² Dale Ahlquist, <http://www.chesterton.org/lecture-9/>.

⁶³ Gen. 6. 16.

⁶⁴ Gen. 6. 14.

⁶⁵ Exod. 2. 3, 5. Scholars tell us that, in all likelihood, it is an Egyptian loan word meaning 'box or chest' (or, just possibly, meaning 'palace').

⁶⁶ See Exod. 1. 22; 2. 2; Heb. 11. 23.

⁶⁷ Exod. 6. 20; Num. 26. 59.

⁶⁸ Cf. 'Build a *barge* of cypress wood', Gen. 6. 14 ('*A New Translation of the Bible*', by James Moffatt).

⁶⁹ Gen. 8. 4 English Standard Version.

⁷⁰ 45 centimetres.

⁷¹ Gen. 6. 15.

⁷² The tabernacle courtyard measured 100 by 50 cubits, Exod. 27. 9-13.

⁷³ Compare Exod. 37. 1 and 38. 22 with Exod. 36. 6.

⁷⁴ Compare 1 Kings 6. 9, 14, 22; 7. 51; 9. 1, 25; 2 Chron. 5. 1; 7. 11; 8. 16 with 2 Chron. 2. 2, 17-18; 1 Kings 5. 13; and 2 Chron. 8. 10.

⁷⁵ Gen. 4. 22.

⁷⁶ The first recorded words of God to Noah come in Genesis 6. 13-21. That is, God did not mention a period of 120 years *to Noah*.

'The whole passage [Gen. 6. 1-9] is then easily explained. The Lord said: My spirit, the spirit of life that I breathed into man's nostrils, shall not abide in man for ever, that is, the children born from the union of the sons of God with the daughters of men, since they are human on their mother's side, shall not be immortal like their fathers, but shall die when their time comes like all members of the human race. My spirit shall not abide for ever in the children born of these marriages, who belong, on their mother's side, to the species of man, in as much as he, too, is flesh ... they are human on their maternal side; hence they will not enjoy immortality, since man, too, is flesh, and his life is destined gradually to reach the stage where those who live the longest will attain the age of a hundred and twenty years. The sense of the passage is apparently this: the earliest generations, which were the strongest on account of their nearness to the Divine source, lived almost to a thousand years, the day of the Almighty; but the span of life was diminishing from generation to generation, and in the end would be stabilized at the point where the healthiest person, if he did not suffer illness or any calamity, would be able to live only a little more than a hundred years ... This would be the fate of all who belong to humankind, be they ordinary people or offspring of the mixed marriages of the sons of God with the daughters of men', Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part 1*, pages 297-298.

'Within the wider setting of Genesis this interpretation is problematic, for Noah and many of his descendants live hundreds of years (Gen 11). Even Abraham lived to 175; Isaac, to 180; and Jacob, to 147 years ... It may be, however, that the author thought of the 120 years as a maximum life-span that was only gradually implemented; cf. the slow-acting curses of Eden, Gen. 3. 16–19. In the post-Flood period, recorded ages steadily decline, and later figures rarely exceed 120. After the time of Jacob, the longest-lived include Joseph (110, Gen. 50. 26), Moses (120, Deut. 34. 7), Joshua (110, Josh. 24. 29). Only Aaron (123, Num. 33. 39) exceeds 120 ... As often in Scripture, the punishment is made to fit the crime. Grasping at immortality through these liaisons, man is sentenced to live a maximum of 120 years, roughly a sevenfold reduction over the average lifespan of the antediluvians. Though some of Noah's immediate descendants live longer than this, their lives are much shorter than the pre-Flood patriarchs. The Pentateuch shows that by the time of Moses one hundred and twenty was regarded as the greatest age a man could hope to reach ... "In those days" (Gen. 6. 4) refers to the pre-Flood period when the events described in verses 1–3 took place. "And also afterwards" is a parenthetical comment reminding the reader that giants were still around in the post-diluvian period (Num. 13. 33)', Wenham, *op.cit.*, pages 142-143, 146-147.

⁷⁷ Gen. 6. 1-2.

For the identity of 'the sons of God' see Job 1. 6; 2. 1; 38. 7.

'The "angel" interpretation is at once the oldest view and that of most modern commentators. It is assumed in the earliest Jewish exegesis (e.g., the books of 1 Enoch 6. 2ff; Jubilees 5. 1), the LXX, Philo De Gigant 2. 358), Josephus (Antiquities of the Jews) and the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QapGen 2:1; CD 2:17–19). The New Testament (2 Pet. 2. 4, Jude 6, 7) and the earliest Christian writers (e.g., Justin, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen) also take this line ... The alternative interpretations presuppose that what Gen 6 really meant was that "the sons of some men" married "the daughters of other men". The present phrase "sons of God" is, to say the least, an obscure way of expressing such an idea. It is made the more implausible by Gen. 6. 1 where "man" refers to all mankind. It is natural to assume that in verse 2 "daughters of man" has an equally broad reference, not a specific section of the human race', Gordon J. Wenham, *op.cit.*, page 139.

Some believe that 'the sons of the God' are the godly descendants of Seth as opposed to 'the daughters of men' who are the goddess descendants of Cain. But, apart from the obvious identical of meaning to 'daughters' in Gen. 6. 1 and Gen. 6. 2, I note that it is explicitly said in chapter 5 that the descendants of *Seth* had daughters.

'The sequence of "saw ... good ... took" parallels most closely the terminology in Gen 3. 6, and suggests the sinfulness of the action of the sons of God. When the woman saw and took, she transgressed a boundary set by the Lord', Wenham, *op.cit.*, page 141.

See also the inspired words, 'the angels *who did not keep their own domain, but rather having left their own habitation*, He has kept with everlasting chains under darkness for the judgement of the great day', Jude 6.

'Within the earthly realm the creator's categories must not be transgressed. Each species had been created to propagate itself "according to its type". Thus crossbreeding of cattle, intermarriage with foreigners, even ploughing with teams of different types of animals or wearing garments of mixed cloth was forbidden by the law. How much worse was this breach of the boundary between the earthly and heavenly realms', Wenham, *op.cit.*, page 146.

⁷⁸ Gen. 5. 32. See 'After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth', ESV; cf. NIV.

⁷⁹ See Gen. 11. 10, where the words 'after the Flood' refer to the commencement of the Flood (note the use of the same expression in Gen. 9. 28, alongside Gen. 7. 6.)

⁸⁰ Gen. 9. 24. Noah began to father children in his five hundredth year. Two years after the Flood, Shem was one hundred years old, and therefore was born when his father was five hundred and two years old. One, then, of Noah's three sons must have been born before this.

We are told that Ham was the youngest son, Gen. 9. 24, where the Hebrew word 'youngest' is the same as used of David in 1 Sam. 16. 11; 17. 14. Japheth must therefore have been Noah's first-born.

In which case, Gen. 10. 21 *must* read that Shem was the brother of 'Japheth the elder' or 'Japheth the eldest' (so JND, NIV, Young's Literal Translation).

'The Hebrew does not mean: "the eldest brother of Japheth", but "the brother of Japheth, who was the eldest, the firstborn"', Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, Part 2, page 218). Shem was not the elder brother of Japheth (as in the RV and ESV and NIV footnote).

The order in which Noah's sons were born was not then, as might be assumed, 'Shem, Ham and Japheth'! I suspect that the standard order of 'Shem, Ham and Japheth' reflects the practice of naming first the son who features in the Messianic line (note how, in the context, God is called 'the Lord God of Shem', Gen. 9. 26, and see Gen. 11. 10-26 with Matt. 1. 2-16).

The same is true, for instance, in chapter 11 verse 26, where the sons of Terah are listed as 'Abram, Nahor, and Haran', whereas we know from other scriptures that Abraham was certainly not Terah's firstborn. (Terah's first son was born when Terah was 70 years of age, Gen. 11. 26. But Abraham was born when Terah was 130 years of age, for Abraham left Haran when his father died, Acts 7. 4 ... Abraham being then 75 years of age, Gen. 12. 4, and Terah 205 years old, Gen. 11. 32.)

⁸¹ We are left to surmise the ages at which Noah's three sons would have married.

⁸² Gen 6. 18 etc. It is just as well that they did later father children, or none of us would be here!

The best assumption which we can make is that, in age, they would each have been nearing the time when men did father children. We therefore turn to the preceding genealogy (in chapter 5) for help. There we discover that

such age varied greatly; from (a) 187 years (in the case of Methuselah, who, in God's good providence, had plenty of time later to make up for lost time) down to (b) 65 years (in the cases of Mahalelel and Enoch).

Given that we have only 100 years gap between the birth of Noah's firstborn and the Flood, we must assume that Noah fathered his sons at the lower end of that range, a fact confirmed e.g. by Gen. 11. 10.

⁸³ Gen. 5. 15 and 21.

⁸⁴ Gen. 7. 6, 11. This might appear to be unnecessary duplication, but the two contexts are different. Verse 6 notifies us of Noah's age at the time of the Flood, whereas verse 11 provides us with the exact date of the commencement of the Flood.

⁸⁵ 600 minus 560 or 570.

⁸⁶ 1 Pet. 3. 20.

⁸⁷ 2 Pet. 3. 9.

⁸⁸ Gen. 6. 17-20.

⁸⁹ Only now was Noah told of the mechanics and exact timing of the Flood: 'after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights', Gen. 7. 4.

⁹⁰ Gen. 7. 2-3.

⁹¹ Gen. 7. 21.

⁹² Gen. 1. 29-30; contrast Gen. 9. 3.

⁹³ Gen. 6. 20.

⁹⁴ Gen. 6. 16.

⁹⁵ 1 Sam. 6. 10-12.

⁹⁶ Gen. 8. 7.

⁹⁷ 1 Kings 17. 4-6.

⁹⁸ 1 Kings 13. 23-28.

⁹⁹ 2 Kings 2. 24.

¹⁰⁰ Dan 6. 21-22. Why do I say '80-year old'? Note the following: (i) Daniel was a young man in 605 BC (Daniel chapter 1); (ii) if he was then in his mid-teens, he would have been born around 620 BC; (iii) Babylon fell in 539 BC; see Dan 5. 30-31; (iv) therefore Daniel would have been about 80 years of age in Daniel 6.

¹⁰¹ Jonah 1. 17.

¹⁰² Matt. 17. 27.

¹⁰³ Cf. 'out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them', Gen. 2. 19.

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, <http://creation.com/how-did-all-the-animals-fit-on-noahs-ark>; and

<https://answersingenesis.org/noahs-ark/how-could-noah-fit-the-animals-on-the-ark-and-care-for-them/>

¹⁰⁵ Gen. 7. 16.

¹⁰⁶ I note that God had not said one word to Noah about *the duration* of the Flood. He did not know therefore how long he, his family and all these creatures were to be cooped up in his ark.

¹⁰⁷ Gen. 7. 11.

¹⁰⁸ Gen. 7. 12.

¹⁰⁹ Gen. 7. 24.

¹¹⁰ The period from the commencement of the Flood to the end of its 'prevailing' is recorded as 150 days, Gen. 7. 24; 8. 3. The same period covers the gap between the 17th day of the second month and the 17th day of the seventh month, Gen. 7.11 with 8. 4. It seems clear, therefore, that a month consisted of 30 days, and that a year would have comprised 360 days. For this reason, '1,260 days', Rev. 11. 3; 12. 6, equals 'forty two months', Rev. 11. 2; 13. 5, and this, in turn, equals 3½ years (called 'times'), Rev. 12. 14; cf. Dan 7. 25.

¹¹¹ Gen. 7. 18, 19, 20, 24.

¹¹² E.g. Exod. 17. 11.

¹¹³ God 'did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the Flood on the world of the ungodly', 2 Pet. 2. 5.

¹¹⁴ 2 Pet. 3. 6.

¹¹⁵ W. H. Griffith Thomas, 'Genesis', page 78.

¹¹⁶ Gen. 8. 14-15. Chapter 7 closes on a scene of almost total desolation, with water enveloping the whole earth, just as though the world had returned to its condition at the dawn of creation, Gen. 1. 2. 20.

'In fact the mountains were covered by at least 15 cubits (22 feet or 7 meters) of water, allowing the ark to float over them. Apparently the story assumes the ark's draft was half its height of thirty cubits (Gen. 6. 15)', Wenham, *ibid.*, page 20.

'God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark', Gen. 8. 1. The word 'remember' does not mean to recall something or someone forgotten. Rather, it signifies 'to act on behalf of someone'. See Gen. 19. 29; 30. 22; 1 Sam. 1. 11, 19; Exod. 2. 24; 6. 5; also Exod. 32. 13; Neh. 13. 14, 22; Psa. 105. 8; Luke 1 54-55; 1. 72-73.

That statement indicates the central hinge of the whole Flood narrative. It was this divine intervention that saved Noah.

The structure runs ...

A God resolves to destroy mankind and tells Noah (6. 5-21).

B Noah builds an ark according to God's instructions (6. 22).

- C** The Lord commands Noah to enter the ark – which Noah does (7. 1-9).
D The Flood begins (7. 10-17).
E The Flood prevails and the water covers the mountains (7. 18-24).
F *God remembers Noah* (8. 1a).
E' The Flood recedes and the mountains are visible (8. 1b-5).
D' The earth dries (8. 6-14).
C' God commands Noah to leave the ark – which Noah does (8. 15-19).
B' Noah builds an altar (8. 20).

A' The Lord resolves not to destroy mankind and tells Noah (8. 21 to 9. 17).

(See: Gary Gromacki, *Genesis, Geology and the Grand Canyon*, *Journal of Ministry of Theology*, Fall 2008, page 52; https://www.academia.edu/9176741/Genesis_Geology_and_the_Grand_Canyon.)

And whereas *until now* the waters of the Flood have 'increased greatly' and 'prevailed exceedingly' so as to cover the highest mountain peaks, Gen 7. 18-19, *from now on* the waters will begin – albeit gradually – to recede, until in God's time the ground is sufficiently dry for Noah and his passengers to disembark. But we note that, although the ark came to rest on one of the mountains of Ararat on the 17th day of the seventh month, Gen 8. 4 (five months to the day after the Flood began, Gen. 7. 11) and although the ending of the vessel's movements must have told Noah that the ark's floating days were over, and although he and his fellow passengers had been cooped up on board already for five months, he took *no action* for a further 114 days. That is almost four more months! And the only action he took *then* was to set free two birds – one clean and one unclean – over a three week period that he might find out whether the waters had yet 'receded from the face of the ground'.

'Noah may open the window, remove the covering, look out, and send forth his messengers, his Caleb and Joshua and their companions, to spy out the land, and report to him what it is, whether it be fat or lean, good or bad, and to bring him the fruit of it', J. G. Bellett, *The Patriarchs*, page 67.

The window must have been in the roof of the ark because it did not allow Noah to see the waters receding, which is why he resorts to sending out the birds. I take the 'window', Gen. 6. 16; 8. 6, to be a gap of about 18 inches between the roof-covering and the sides of the ark.

¹¹⁷ The key dates of the Flood. Generally speaking, the scriptures are precise as to the dating of each of the main events in connection with the great Flood. The details, as I understand them, are as follows:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Scripture references</u>
Flood announced and instruction to build ark.	Unknown. Probably 30-50 years before the Flood.	Gen. 6. 13
God's command that Noah enter ark.	10 th day of second month of Noah's 600 th year.	Gen. 7. 1 (note 'yet seven days', v. 4).
Flood commences.	17 th day of second month of Noah's 600 th year DAY 0	Gen. 7. 11
Heavy rainfall etc. ceases.	40 days later DAY 40	7. 4, 17
Flood 'prevails'. But after 40 days begins to decline gradually. By the end of 150 days lowered to point that ark could settle on a high mountain.	Another 110 days; making 150 days in all. 17 th day of seventh month DAY 150	7. 24 8. 3-4 (verse 3 refers to the 150 days of 7. 24).
Flood continues to decrease to 10th month. (As it does for another three months – see 8. 13.) Other mountain tops now visible.	1 st day of 10 th month ~ i.e. period of 74 days (13+30+30-1) DAY 224	8. 5
Noah sends out a raven.	40 days later DAY 264	8.6-7

Noah sends out a dove for the first time.	7 days later (see "yet other", 8.10) DAY 271	8.8
Noah sends out a dove for the 2nd and 3rd times.	14 days more DAY 285 i.e. now 2 nd day of 12 th month	8. 10, 12
Noah removes covering and sees dried ground.	Further 29 days; now 1 st day of 1 st month of Noah's 601 st year DAY 314	8.13
Earth now dry enough for Noah to leave ark. God tells him to do this.	57 days later, now 27 th day of 2 nd month. DAY 371	8. 14

Compare ... <https://answersingenesis.org/bible-timeline/biblical-overview-of-the-flood-timeline/>

¹¹⁸ Gen. 8. 12.

¹¹⁹ Gen. 8. 13.

¹²⁰ It is possible however that, unlike the window, the door was in the Lord's province. That is, that only the One who had shut Noah in, could let him out.

¹²¹ Gen. 8. 14.

¹²² The word in Gen. 1. 9.

¹²³ Gen. 8. 13.

¹²⁴ Heb. 11. 7.

¹²⁵ Gen. 8. 20.

¹²⁶ Gen. 9. 20.

¹²⁷ Gen. 8. 20.

¹²⁸ Gen. 4. 4; Heb. 11. 4.

¹²⁹ 'In the broader ancient Near East, sacrifices were thought to provide food for the gods. In the Gilgamesh Epic, for example, the god Ea knows that Enlil is making a big mistake by attempting to destroy humanity by virtue of the Flood because by doing so he is cutting the gods off from their food supply. Indeed, right after the Flood waters receded and Utnapishtim, the Babylonian equivalent of Noah, steps out of the ark to offer a sacrifice, the gods "crowded around the sacrificer like flies" because they were so hungry. The biblical God does not need sacrifices for food. The psalmist in an oracle in which God tells the Israelites, "If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?" (Psalms 50:12–13)', Tremper Longman III, *'Cain and Abel: A Story of Rebellion, Judgment, and Grace'*, accessed at ... <https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/cain-and-abel>.

¹³⁰ Gen. 6. 22; 7. 5, 16. Also Gen. 7. 1 with 7. 7; and Gen. 8. 16 with 8. 18.

¹³¹ Gen. 6. 14.

¹³² 'You shall take with you seven seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female', Gen. 7. 2 literally. 'The meaning of the words *male and female*, coming after the number *two*, is unmistakable; but here, following the number *seven* [literally, 'seven, seven'; rendered: 'seven pairs'], there would have been need for further clarification. Had the text read, *seven seven, male and female*, we should have been in doubt as to the respective number of males and females, and we might have taken the sense to be seven animals of every kind of clean animal, some of them males and some females. To make the position clear, it was necessary to state here *יִשׁ וְיִשְׁתּוֹ 'iš we'išto*, the word *יִשׁ 'iš* ['man'] having a distributive connotation: each one of the males together with his female. Hence the phrase signifies: *seven pairs* of each kind of clean animal. And since the text has here *the male and his mate*, the expression is repeated in the second half of the verse, in order to preserve the parallelism, and to make it clear that the clean and unclean animals differed only in regard to the *number*—not the principle—of (mated) pairs', U. Cassuto, *'Genesis Part 2'*, page 74.

See also the Revised Version of Gen. 7. 2, and note that the rendering 'seven pairs' is found in the Vulgate, the LXX., Michaelis, De Wette, Alford and Wordsworth.

¹³³ Although Noah did not yet know it, later he and others would be authorised to eat animal flesh, Gen. 9. 3. But how was it possible to speak of animals that are clean and not clean (Gen 7. 2, 8; 8. 20) at a time when the laws distinguishing between these categories (Leviticus 11) had not yet been formulated? The explanation may be that the concept of clean and unclean animals was already in existence prior to the Law, particularly in relation to

sacrifices. (Our verse is not referring to food laws – as is Leviticus 11 – because the diet at the time was purely vegetarian.)

¹³⁴ And these were the only types permitted for sacrifice.

¹³⁵ 'Noah walked with God', Gen. 6. 9.

¹³⁶ 'Noah ... prepared an ark', Heb. 11. 7.

¹³⁷ 'Noah ... a preacher of righteousness', 2 Pet. 2. 5.

¹³⁸ 'Noah ... waited another seven days', Gen. 8. 10, 12.

¹³⁹ 'Noah built an altar to the Lord ... and offered burnt offerings', Gen. 8. 20.

¹⁴⁰ God smelled an odour of 'rest' (of repose, satisfaction - a play on the name 'Noah'), Gen. 8. 21. This is the only time the Lord is actually recorded as having 'smelt' a sacrifice. David prays that He will (1 Sam. 26. 19), while Lev. 26. 31 declares that God will not 'smell' the offerings of the wicked. For God to 'smell' an offering implies His acceptance of both the offering and the offerer.

¹⁴¹ Gen. 8. 21-22.

¹⁴² Gen. 9. 8-17. On the first four (Gen. 6. 13; 7. 1; 8. 15; 9. 1) of the five occasions on which God spoke to Noah, His message took the form largely of commands, whereas on the final occasion (Gen. 9. 8) it took the form of a promise, indeed, more accurately, of a covenant.

¹⁴³ 'I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth', Isa. 54. 9.

¹⁴⁴ Gen. 9. 2-4. There could be two strands to this permission. First, *in the short term*, Noah and family would probably have faced a food shortage otherwise. We have no way of knowing how much of the food stored for the Flood period (Gen. 6. 21) was still available – or edible. Nor do we know what vegetation would have been available for food when the family left the ark. We know only that it was almost seven and a half months after 'the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat', Gen. 8. 4, before Noah and family stepped out, Gen. 8. 18, and that, 93 days before they left the ark, the dove returned with 'a freshly plucked olive leaf', Gen. 8. 11.

(The key time notes are as follows: (i) The ark came to rest: the 17th day of the seventh month of Noah's 600th year, Gen. 8. 3. (ii) 74 days later, on the 1st of the tenth month, the tops of other mountains could be seen, Gen. 8. 5. (iii) 40 days later Noah 'opened the window', Gen. 8. 6. (iv) 50 days later, on the first day of the first month of Noah's 601st year, Noah removed the covering of the ark, Gen. 8. 13. And (v) 57 days later, on the 27th day of the second month, Noah and family were instructed to leave the ark, Gen. 8. 14-16. 74+40+50+57=221 days. With months of 30 days, this represents almost seven and a half months.)

Although this time period would have given ample time for many plants to grow again, it would certainly not have given time for fruit trees to have grown and provided fruit – see Gen. 1. 29. But we have no way of knowing when, and how fast, the clean animals reproduced, so as to enable Noah and family to kill them for food. (Although it may be that the 'clean/unclean' distinction then applied only to sacrificial victims and not to man's food, as later it did for Israel, Lev. 11.)

Second, *in the long term*. It is possible that pre-Flood there was a 'water vapour canopy' around the earth – 'the waters above the firmament/expanse', Gen. 1. 7 – which caused 'a greenhouse effect', which among other things, shielded mankind from harmful cosmic radiation. After God caused this 'water vapour canopy' to condense and to help drown the old world, mankind may well have needed extra health fortification from the proteins and nutrients found in meat (also vitamins such as B12).

It is also possible, of course, that the change brought about by the loss of that 'canopy' goes some way to explaining why man's lifespan reduced so dramatically after the time of the Flood - which reduction is demonstrated clearly by a comparison of the genealogies of Genesis 5 and Genesis 11. The average lifespan of men in chapter 5 is 914 years. (This calculation spans Adam to Noah - but excludes Enoch, because he didn't die.) In contrast, the list in chapter 11 provides an average lifespan of 300 years (This calculation spans Arphaxad to Terah. I have left Shem out because he lived for 98 years before the Flood, and 502 years after.) There is more to it than this, of course. It seems that the 'dividing' of men in the days of Peleg, the son of Eber, (Gen. 10. 25) led to a further quite dramatic shortening of man's lifespan. (The recorded lifespans in years in chapter 11 run 438, 433, 464 (Eber), 239, 239, 230, 148, 205.) Probably the explanation lies with the so-called Tower of Babel, which inevitably had harmful effects upon mankind in the form of travel, inter-tribal warfare etc.

The overall picture painted by scripture is of declining lifespans from the amazing longevity of men pre-Flood, through to the normal life expectancy with which we are familiar today - see Psa. 90. 10 (written by Moses).

See ... *Earth's Pre-Flood Vapor Canopy: A Review Article—GTJ—V3 #1—Spr 82—124.*

¹⁴⁵ Gen. 9. 5-6. It may well be that one reason why the Lord focuses so heavily on capital punishment on account of murder ('your lifeblood I will require a reckoning ... From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image') is that, prior to the Flood, man's sinfulness manifested itself especially in 'violence'; Gen. 6. 11, 13. It is important to observe that the reason for this law is not based upon the well-being of man, but is grounded upon the fact that man is made 'in the image of God'.

¹⁴⁶ Gen. 1. 22, 28; 5. 2.

¹⁴⁷ Gen. 2. 3.

¹⁴⁸ Gen. 9. 9-11.

¹⁴⁹ <https://rodgers-associates.com/blog/do-you-think-it-will-stop/>; cf. W, Wiersbe, *Be Basic*, page 120.

¹⁵⁰ Gen. 9. 13-17. 'Three men in Scripture saw significant rainbows. Noah saw the rain-bow after the storm ... the prophet Ezekiel saw the rainbow in the midst of the storm ... the Apostle John saw the rainbow before the storm of judgement broke loose', W. Wiersbe, *ibid.*, pages 121-122. .

¹⁵¹ Gen. 9. 20.

¹⁵² Gen. 9. 5-6.

¹⁵³ Rom. 7. 18.

¹⁵⁴ 1 Cor. 10. 12.

¹⁵⁵ James 1. 14.

¹⁵⁶ Scripture gives frequent warnings about drinking too much alcoholic drink. Wisdom suggest that wine is best avoided if possible. See, for example, Isa. 5. 22; Prov. 21. 17; 23. 20–21, 29–35, and for the condemnation of drunkenness, Eph. 5. 18. Compare also 1 Cor. 5. 11; 6. 10; Gal. 5. 19-21.

It should be noted that 'Noah *began* to be a man of the soil', Gen. 9. 20 lit. His was a gradual breakdown. All sins have a 'beginning'; cf. Micah 1. 13.

¹⁵⁷ Contrast 2 Sam 1. 20.

¹⁵⁸ 1 Cor. 13. 6.

¹⁵⁹ Prov. 3. 12; 1 Pet. 4. 8.

¹⁶⁰ Tit. 2. 11-12.

¹⁶¹ Gen. 6. 8.

¹⁶² 2 Pet. 2. 5 KJV.