

The passages covered in this lesson begin a week before the beginning of the flood that God sends to purge the earth of the wickedness that He saw in chapter 6. God preserves Noah and his family in the ark along with a selection of animals that will replenish the earth once the flood is over.

¹ And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

Verse 4 tells us that this is one week before the flood starts and the LORD is instructing Noah in the final preparations. Noah and his family are move into the ark to be saved from the coming destruction because they had been chosen by the LORD. As we saw in Gen. 6:9, Noah was “just” (righteous) because he walked with God. The Hebrew word for “generation” refers to a period of time and/or a place. Noah had continued to walk with God despite being surrounded by a world filled with wickedness and so God chose to preserve him and his family from the judgment about to come upon the world.

² Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that *are* not clean by two, the male and his female. ³ Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.

Here we see that even before the Mosaic Law defined them, there is already a distinction made between clean and unclean animals. Presumably the clean animals were those suitable for sacrifice and/or for food, although the eating of animals does not begin until after the flood (Gen. 9:3). Commentators differ on the numbers of animals being brought on board the ark, as some believe the “by sevens” refers to seven individual animals while others believe it refers to seven male/female pairs. The same difference of opinion applies to the unclean beasts who come by two: two animals or two pairs of animals? The fowls are also collected by sevens, whether seven individuals birds or seven pairs. If the instruction refers to two and seven pairs, that would produce a larger genetic base for replenishing the world with their species. The LORD also gives the reason these animals are being brought on the ark: to prevent their extinction (“to keep seed alive”). It may be that the flood is what caused the extinction of the dinosaurs and other ancient species as God chose not to preserve them on the ark.

⁴ For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.

“For yet seven days” – Noah has one week to get his family and the animals moved into the ark. Fortunately for Noah the LORD caused the animals to come to Noah rather than Noah needing to go out and search for them (**Gen. 7:15** *“And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life.”*).

“and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights” – Apparently up until this time it had never rained but the earth had been watered by a “mist” from subterranean water sources (**Gen. 2:6** *“But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.”*). Not only did it rain for forty days and forty nights, but the earth was also flooded from below as the subterranean water sources flowed above ground: **Gen. 7:11** *“In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.”* The commentators that believe there was a water canopy over the earth (Gen. 1:7) also believe it contributed to the flooding as it collapsed and fell to earth.

“and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth” – All living creatures that lived on land and breathed air would die, including people who were not on the ark.

⁵ And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him. ⁶ And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

“And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him” – Noah’s obedience was further evidence that he was a both a righteous man and a man of faith. **Heb. 11:7** *“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”*

“And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth” – Longevity was not unusual before the flood but after the flood the lifespan of men dropped off significantly. This drop could be due to the absence of the water canopy shielding the earth from ultraviolet and other harmful solar and cosmic radiation.

Verses 7-18: Noah and his family enter the ark followed by the animals. The LORD then shuts them in as the flood begins, signifying His sovereign protection through His sealing of the ark.

¹⁹ And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that *were* under the whole heaven, were covered. ²⁰ Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

These verses describe the magnitude of the flooding, because the water reached a height of some 15 cubits (22.5 feet) above the highest mountains so that every mountain was under water. Such a description makes it hard to make the case that this was a local flood as some have tried to do. Verse 19 says “all” the high hills that were “under the whole heaven” (the Hebrew word for “whole heaven” refers to the sky) were covered with water, indicate the entire planet was deluged with water.

²¹ And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: ²² All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry *land*, died. ²³ And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained *alive*, and they that were with him in the ark.

Everything that lived on dry land and breathed air died during the flood. Sea life was obviously excluded from this destruction since they would be in their element during the flood. Only Noah, his family, and all the animals that were with him in the ark survived.

²⁴ And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

After the 40 days and 40 nights of rain, it took another 110 days before the waters began to recede. Even today flood waters will continue to rise for a period of time after the rain stops before they start to recede.

Genesis 8

¹ And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged; ² The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained;

“And God remembered Noah...” - This phrase speaks to God’s sovereign protection for Noah and the occupants (human and animal) of the ark. God kept a watchful eye over Noah.

“and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged [subside; decrease]” – God, knowing the limits of humans and animals confined within the ark, began the process of removing the flood waters with a wind to promote evaporation.

“The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained” – God also prevented the subterranean waters and new rain from impeding the drying process. God controlled the weather so that the flood waters would recede at a responsible pace.

³ And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated. ⁴ And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.

The waters drained away for another 150 days, until the ark came to rest upon a mountain in the region of Ararat. The specific mountain is not stated. Noah entered the ark on the 17th of the second month of his 600th year (Gen. 7:11) and the ark now came to rest on the mountains of Ararat on the 17th of the seventh month, a period of five months.

Verses 5-19: Apparently even though the ark rested on the mountain, the mountain wasn’t visible until the tenth month, at which time the tops of the mountains became visible. Forty days later Noah started using a raven and a dove to gauge the progress of the receding of the waters. Finally, on the 27th of the 2nd month of Noah’s 601st year God gave Him permission to leave the ark because the waters had sufficiently receded (v. 14). They had been on the ark for a year and ten days.

²⁰ And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

In an act of thanksgiving and worship, Noah builds an altar and makes a burnt offering to the LORD. The fact he took “of” the clean animals implies he did not offer up all of the clean animals (which would have extincted them), but took a sample from each species of clean animal and clean fowl for use in the offering.

²¹ And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

“And the LORD smelled a sweet savour” – The LORD was pleased with the burnt offerings that Noah made.

“and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake” – This decision becomes the basis of the promise God makes to Noah in the next chapter that He seals with the sign of the rainbow.

“for [though; but; because] the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth” – The Hebrew word translated “for” is a conjunction that can express contrast or agreement. In this context it makes more sense that it would express contrast, so that the LORD is saying that He will not curse the ground any more because of man’s sin despite man being inherently sinful.

“neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done” – The LORD promises never to destroy every living thing again “as I have done.” The LORD has destroyed individuals and groups of people as necessary, but never again would He bring a worldwide destruction of life as He did with the flood.

²² While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

The LORD promises that the cycles of the seasons and day/night will continue and not interrupted by judgment from God. The key phrase, however, is “while the earth remaineth.” There will come a time when the earth will no longer remain because it will pass away to make way for the new heavens and earth (2 Peter 3:10; Rev. 21:1).