

## 18. Preparations for the Flood

'These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he (Genesis 6:9-22).'

Having described the general sinful condition of humanity in the previous verses of Genesis 6, the Bible now records the preparations for the flood which would destroy sinful humanity at the conclusion of the remaining 120 years allotted to it.

**Verse 9:** The use of the 'toledoth' formula (2:4, 5:1) in this verse marks the beginning of a new section in Genesis. Whereas the previous section had concluded with the introduction of Noah, this new section in Genesis will tell the wonderful story of Noah and his immediate family. But it is also the record of the first universal judgment of God upon humanity and can therefore be regarded as the beginning of universal judgments.

In this verse there is a description given of Noah that separates him or marks him out from the generations of sinful humanity then inhabiting the earth. Of all humanity Noah is alone described as walking with God, as Enoch who had gone before him (5:22-24). He is described as a just and perfect man in contrast to all those round about him.

**NOTE: INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY QUESTION HERE:** Explain how Noah could be a just man in a world so utterly corrupted by sin (6:9)?

**QUESTION:** How is it possible for Noah to have been both just and perfect? How does a man polluted with the contagion of sin ever become what Noah was described to be?

Noah lived in a righteous manner and this he also preached (2 Pet 2:5). This means far more than being declared righteous, for it also means a way of living in this context.

Certainly Noah was what he was by the grace of God. He did not earn favour with God by his living, but began his way of living because of his favoured position. In short Noah lived the right way because God had been gracious to him. The fact that he lived righteously was demonstrated in his being blameless.

**Verse 10:** This verse again reminds us that Noah had three sons prior to the flood - Shem, Ham and Japheth.

**Verses 11 and 12:** These two verses reinforce what has already been said of the general sinful condition of the earth (6:1-7). The longsuffering of the Lord had led to no real change in the lives of men, with rebellion against God and heartlessness against their fellow men still being the prevailing state of humanity.

**Verse 13:** This verse marks the end of men as certain. There has been no repentance by men, only continued rebellion and sinfulness. As a consequence of this sinful condition, pre-flood humanity is to be destroyed, along with the earth in the first universal judgment in the history of the universe.

In some manner God revealed his purpose of judgment and preservation to Noah. The Scriptures do not say whether Noah had a vision or witnessed a Theophany. What is known however, is that in some manner God revealed to Noah what His plans were for the earth and humanity.

**Verse 14:** God now begins to explain to Noah what it is he is to do as the judgment of God upon the earth draws near. He is to make an 'ark of gopher wood.' There seems to be no agreement among commentators as to just what 'gopher wood' actually is. Some have thought it to be cedar, some fir and others pine. This far from the time of Noah it is probably of little significance, especially given that we are not the ones building the ark!

Noah was to seal the ark both inside and out with pitch. This would no doubt be to prevent the penetration of water. The ark is also to have rooms in it.

**Verse 15:** In this verse the overall dimensions of the ark to be built are given. The measurements are given as 'the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.' This would be about 130 meters long, by 21 meters wide and 13 meters high. If these calculations are correct, this gives an area of some 35 490 cubic meters. This is clearly an impressive 'ark.'

**Verse 16:** The overall design of the ark now begins to appear. It shall have three stories, a window near the top of the ark and a door in the side.

**Verse 17:** The means of God's universal judgment are here given for the first time in an expansion of verse 13. The construction of an ark may have appeared to Noah as a huge undertaking, but now he is given information to help him understand the purpose of constructing the ark.

God is going to bring a universal judgment to bear upon the earth. It will be a judgment so severe in effect and so widespread in scope, that all of life upon the earth and in the sky show be killed.

**Verse 18:** In this verse we have the first specific mention in the Bible of the concept of a covenant (though aspects of a covenant do actually exist earlier with Adam). A covenant is basically a promise, in this case a promise of God to a man. God promises to establish His covenant with Noah (see Gen 8:20-22; 9:1-17). What this covenant entails is not yet given, but it will be established with Noah. This promise would have given Noah great comfort and hope in God, for though destruction was coming upon the earth in the form of a universal flood, Noah would most certainly be preserved along with his family.

With the promise of a covenant given to Noah, God explains that Noah and his family are to go into the ark when it is built. These eight people are to be spared the death and destruction that will soon come upon the earth. Noah must live to have the covenant of God made with him.

**QUESTIONS:** What effect upon Noah would the promise of a covenant from God bring? Are there similarities between this effect upon Noah and the effect upon believers of God's promise to us in Christ? Discuss.

What part does Noah play in this covenant to this point? Discuss.

**Verses 19 and 20:** Also to be taken into the ark with Noah and his family are two of every kind of living organism. There are to be no complete mass extinctions as a result of this universal judgment. It is to be a new beginning with creatures preserved from the previous world. A little further into the account when more detail is given of God's deliverance plan, we will see that seven of some kinds of animals are to be spared (7:2,8,9).

It should also be noted in verse 20 that these creatures will come to Noah. Clearly Noah is to be concerned with the building of the ark, while God actually brought the creatures to him in order for Noah to take them into the ark.

**QUESTION:** How 'new' would the new beginning actually be after the flood? What would be still in the world long after the flood had passed?

**Verse 21:** In order to keep this large collection of organisms alive and well during their flood ordeal, Noah is to ensure that all the food necessary for their detainment is safely stored within the ark as well.

**Verse 22:** Though it was obviously a mammoth undertaking, Noah set to work and did all

that God told him to do (Heb 11:7). Let us reflect on this for a moment or two - what did this great work that Noah was called unto by God involve? The construction of this ark would have taken Noah many years to build. He needed to gather all the materials needed as well as construct the ark. At the completion of the ark he was required to gather enough food for all who would be aboard the ark for the entirety of it's journey upon the floodwaters. Yet in all this, doubtless with derision by those round about also, Noah believed and obeyed.

**QUESTIONS:** Of what significance was faith in Noah's response to God? See also Hebrews 11:7.

Reflect upon the nature of your faith. Is it of the same type as Noah's?

## INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY

Was the flood local or universal? How can we know this for sure?

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