

Genesis Eight

The End of the Flood

1 Now Elohim remembered¹ Noah, and all the beasts, and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. So Elohim made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters decreased.² ²Also the springs of the deep and the windows of heaven were shut,³ and the rain from heaven was ended.³ So the water receded⁴ from the earth steadily, and after the end of a hundred and fifty days the water diminished.⁵

4 And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, in the mountains of Ararat.⁶ ⁵And the waters diminished steadily until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month,⁷ the tops of the mountains were seen.

The Opening of the Ark

6 And it happened at the end of forty days,⁸ that Noah opened the ark's window which he had made.⁷ Then he sent out a raven,⁹ and it went back and forth,¹⁰ until the waters were dried up from the earth.¹¹ ⁸And he sent out a dove¹² from him,¹³ to see if the waters had subsided from off the face of the ground.⁹ But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, because the waters were on the face of the whole earth.¹⁴ And he put out his hand, and took her, and brought her to him into the ark.¹⁰ And he waited yet other seven days,¹⁵ and he repeated sending the dove from the ark.¹¹ And the dove came to him at the time of the evening, and, behold, a freshly plucked¹⁶ olive-leaf was in her beak. And Noah knew that the waters had subsided from on the earth.¹² And he waited yet seven more days, and sent out the dove, and she did not repeat returning again to him.¹⁷

The Departure from the Ark

13 And it occurred in the six hundred and first year, on the first day of the first month, the waters dried up from on the earth, and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.¹⁸ ¹⁴And in the second month, on the twenty seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.¹⁹ ¹⁵And Elohim spoke to Noah,

saying,¹⁶ Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and you sons and you sons' wives with you.¹⁷ Every living thing that is with you of all flesh, both birds, and livestock, and every crawling thing that crawls on the earth, bring out with you, so that they may multiply on the earth, and be fruitful, and increase on the earth.¹⁸ Then Noah went out and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him.¹⁹ Every beast, every crawling thing, and every bird, all that moves on the earth, went out of the ark according to their kind.

The Burnt Sacrifice by Noah

20 And Noah built an altar²⁰ to Yahweh, and took from every clean animal, and from every clean bird, and he sacrificed burnt offerings²¹ on the altar.²¹ And Yahweh smelled the soothing scent; and Yahweh said in his heart²², I will not again add to the curse the ground because of man,²³ though the purpose²⁴ of man's heart is evil from his youth. And I will not again destroy every living thing, as I did.²² Through all days of the earth, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and autumn, and day and night will not cease.²⁵

End Notes

- 1 The intention of this sentence is to cause the reader's mind to think in terms of God's intervention. *Remembering* in this sense is an idiomatic way of expressing God's consideration of those in the Ark for an extended period of time. Therefore, at the precisely the right time, He began to change their situation. Keil and Delitzsch correctly state, "God's 'remembering' was a manifestation of Himself, an effective restraint of the force of the raging element." It in no way indicates that God had forgotten Noah (yes, I've heard that taught).
- 2 The first part of God's intervention is the supernaturally caused wind that passed over the earth (עַל-הָאָרֶץ). It had the result of causing the water to decrease.
- 3 The second part of God's intervention was the shutting off of the two water sources, the *springs of the deep* (מַעֲיֵנות תְּהוֹמוֹת), and the *windows of the heavens* (אֲרָבֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם). Once the windows of the heavens were shut, the rain ceased. That these were supernatural interventions by God is clear. The expression of cause and effect brings a correct supernatural understanding of the end of the flood. This was not a natural event, neither in its production nor in its cessation.

In the polytheistic Sumerian flood story, the protagonist of the story, Ziusudra, after his disembarkation, worships the sun god. But the sun, which is not mentioned by Moses, had no relationship to the actual events, for God did it all through supernatural intervention.
- 4 Literally, *the waters turned from on the earth* (הָאָרֶץ מֵעַל הַמַּיִם יָשְׁבוּ).
- 5 While it rained 40 days and nights, it took a total of 150 days for the water to recede to the point where the Ark could come to rest. The decrease first became noticeable when the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat on the 17th day of the seventh month, which assuming 30 days to a month, is exactly 150 days after the flood commenced.
- 6 The common notion that the Ark came to rest on Mount Ararat is mistaken. At the time the Hebrew Scriptures were being written, Ararat referred to a range of mountains, not an individual peak. Hence the Ark came to rest in the mountains of Ararat (הַרֵי אֲרָרָט). The Hebrew word *mountains* is a plural construct, *mountains of*.
- 7 Again, given a 30 day month, the tops of the mountains became visible 73 days after the Ark came to rest. The mountains in view were the Ararat Range. The total days from the beginning of the flood at this point is 223.
- 8 Verse 6 begins a detailed retrospective of the events summarized in the first 5 verses.
- 9 The sending forth of these birds indicates that Noah was seeking information concerning the lessening of the flood waters. The entire episode seems to indicate experimentation, perhaps to assuage the ark's human occupants' curiosity. After all, they'd been locked up in that boat for a long time.

There is no indication in the text that God spoke to Noah once He shut the door. It is not until verses 15 and 16 that God speaks to him, and commands that he leave the ark. Perhaps, since God closed the door, only He could open it. Perhaps the lack of communication fed Noah's curiosity.
- 10 The expression back and forth indicates that the raven returned to the ark, but evidently was not admitted.
- 11 The raven was not admitted to the ark, as the dove later was. It must have found enough flotsam to sustain itself. Ravens, like many raptors, flesh, including carrion, and the water must have been abounding with all the animals which had been consumed by the flood.
- 12 The Hebrew word *dove* (יֹינֵה) refers to a bird that will return to its origin. Some believe the Hebrew word refers to a homing pigeon, which today are considered to be of the same family of birds (Columbidae) as doves. Today, pigeons are distinguished from doves by their larger size, but such a distinction may not have been made in Noah's day.
- 13 That is, from his presence. Note in verse 9 that Noah stretched his hand out, and brought the bird *to him*, that is, into Noah's presence. *He reached out his hand and brought her to him into the ark* (וַיִּשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וַיִּקְרָחַהּ וַיָּבֵא אֵתָהּ אֵלָיו אֶל-הַתֵּבָה). He handled the dove, indicating a willingness on the bird's part to relate to Noah. Some have supposed that he may have trained the doves to be handled, though the text is not explicit.
- 14 Another indication that the dove may have been trained is that she did not, like the raven may have done, eat the abundant carrion floating in the water. Dove's and pigeons will eat carrion, but keep in mind that Noah brought food to feed all the animals, and the dove had been fed during her extended sojourn in the ark. The dove found no land, the finding of which is the evident reason Noah sent her out.
- 15 Seven days is a reasonable amount of time for the water to perhaps subside.

End Notes

- 16 The word freshly plucked (פֶּרֶךְ) indicates that somewhere olive trees had survived the flood, and were producing fresh leaves.
- 17 The actions of the two birds, taken together, made it clear that the water had receded far enough to sustain animal life on the surface of the earth.
- 18 The 601st year refers to the birth of Noah. The first day of the first month Noah could see that the surface of the ground (Lit. *face of the ground*: פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה) was dry. Note the word is *adamah* (אֲדָמָה), *ground*, not *'eret* (אֶרֶץ), *earth*. Therefore, verse 13 does not mean that all the waters had receded from the earth itself. Rather, only that Noah could see dry ground. See the next sentence (vs. 14).
- 19 It was not until the 27th day of the second month, 57 days after the removal of the covering of the ark, that the earth was completely dried up (יִבְשָׁה הָאֲרֶץ). Here, then, is the word *'eret*, *earth*. Finally, on that day, God (Elohim) commanded Noah to leave the ark (verses 15 & 16).
- 20 The word altar (מִזְבֵּחַ) occurs 401 times in the Hebrew text, of which this is the first occurrence. The concept of the altar upon which one makes sacrifices is directly associated with worship in the Old Testament. Worship was not simply reverence for God, but included a sacrificial act. Note that Noah offered both clean and unclean animals to Yahweh. At this time, sacrifice was not limited to clean animals.
- Keil and Delitzsch state that “The sons of Adam had built no altar for their offerings, because God was still present on the earth in paradise, so that they could turn their offerings and hearts towards that abode. But with the flood God had swept paradise away, withdrawn the place of His presence, and set up His throne in heaven, from which He would henceforth reveal Himself to man.... In future, therefore, the hearts of the pious had to be turned towards heaven, and their offerings and prayers needed to ascend on high if they were to reach the throne of God.” (K & D, under the verse.) See the note on the next verse.
- 21 The first mention of burnt offerings in the Bible occurs in this sentence. The noun עֹלָה is derived from the verb עָלָה, *to go up, ascend*. It is a reference to the ascent of the smoke, and is regularly used of burnt-offerings. Noah recognized that God’s presence was no longer on earth, as it had been earlier, perhaps even up until the flood. But the idea of a burnt-sacrifice which rose toward heaven indicates that Noah (and the writer Moses) viewed Yahweh as being in the heavenly sphere by the time of the flood.
- Later, under the Mosaic code, God provides specific requirements for burnt offerings, but not yet at this time. Such acts of sacrifice are forms of worship, the giving up of something valuable to God. The concept of sacrifice is always associated with worship, and apart from sacrifice no worship occurs. The nature of sacrifice changed with the grace provision for daily living in the New Testament. No longer does God require physical sacrifices. Note Hebrews 13:15, for example.
- 22 The word *heart* (לֵב) occurs twice in this verse, first of God, then of man. The ancient metaphorical use of *heart* does not refer to the seat of the emotions, but to the ultimate source of thought, and then, by extension, the mind. Throughout both Testaments, *heart* is the word which means the mind, the organ of thought.
- 23 This is not lifting of the curse given by God to Adam, but a promise to not increase the curse through another flood. The Hebrew *hifil* form of the Hebrew word אָזַן means rightly *add*, though most versions do not accurately translated it.
- 24 Strangely this noun, יָצַר, is often translated *imagination*. See the KJV, NKJV, RSV, and ASV. The Revised English Bible translates it *inclination*, as does the NIV. Interestingly, Darby translates it *thought*, which, though better, is not the best translation. In this translator’s library, the only version that gets it right is the NASB, which translates the word *intent*. The meaning is *purpose*, or *intention*.
- 25 This sentence summarizes that the regular activities and seasons of man on the earth will not again be interrupted (cease) through a flood.