



## *Ark that Noah Built Isn't a Boat*

Haven't you ever noticed in Genesis chapter 6 to 9 that this Ark that Noah built isn't a boat or ship? According to the Hebrew word for Ark is called a **teva** (תֵּבָה), which mean a "box/chest," which is why it doesn't call it as boat or ship. Genesis 6–9 describes it this way:

- יְהוָה (I AM=YAH) tells Noah to make a *teva* of gopher wood, with rooms, pitched inside and out, with length, breadth, and height, and with ***one door*** and ***one window*** (Genesis 6:14–16). It is described more like a big rectangular container than something designed to steer.
- When the flood comes, the text says, "***the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth***" and "***went upon the face of the waters***" (Genesis 7:17–18). This huge ark was **lifted** and **carried** by the water; there is no language or mentioned it sailing, steering, oars, sail, or rudder.
- Later, "***the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat***" (Genesis 8:4). Again, it emphasizes the ark coming to rest, not Noah navigating it.

Don't get confused with the similar ideal of the Ark of Covenant or Moses' basket.

Shared rectangular form of the Ark of Covenant and Noah's Ark are depicted as rectangular boxes or chests in the Hebrew text. Noah's "***teva***" (Hebrew word) is a massive, multi-level rectangular container, sealed for floating like the barge or log raft. The Covenant's "***aron***" (Hebrew word) is a small rectangular chest, gold-overlaid with a lid and poles—visually similar in basic box-like proportions but vastly different in scale and features.

The key shape difference Noah emphasizes is vast length and width for stability on water, with rooms inside. The Covenant's is compact and ornate, designed for portability on land, not flotation—lacking pitch, levels, or buoyancy features. Both evoke a "**protected box**" idea, but Noah's is a giant floating vessel while the Covenant's is a sacred portable shrine.

So again, the English word "**ark**" is used for both due to translation choices that highlight their shared "rectangular chest/box" shape, despite different Hebrew origins.

### Translation History

The Five Books uses **teva** (תֵּבָה) for Noah's Ark—a rare word for a floating "box" or life-preserving chest (also for baby Moses' basket)—and **aron** (אָרוֹן) for the Ark of the Covenant, meaning a portable "chest" or coffin-like box. Latin translators (like the Vulgate) rendered both as *arca* ("chest, box, coffer"), a general term for enclosed containers, which carried into Old English *earc* and modern "ark."

### Why "Ark" Fits Both

This choice reflects their common rectangular, boxy form: Noah's as a giant sealed vessel to "hold/contain" life through the flood, the Covenant's as a small ornate chest to "hold" sacred tablets—both protective enclosures from a root meaning "to hold, guard." English Torah kept "ark" to preserve that visual and conceptual link, even though the originals differ, emphasizing divine preservation in box-like structures.

So, within the five books that Moses wrote, Noah's Ark is never:

- Called a "ship."
- Said to "sail."
- Given any means of human control (no captain, no steering).

Instead, the picture is:  $\text{שׁוֹפֵט}$  gives the design, the waters lift the ark, and  $\text{שׁוֹפֵט}$  is the one who controls its fate and where it comes to rest. The ark is a protected **box** of preservation, not a ship in the usual sense of human navigation.

Again, the physical point of view of this Ark is a huge rectangular looking box that can float quite well if a few simple conditions are met. Just likes how a classic flat log raft—logs lashed together side by side—floating on that people routinely stand, walk, and even pole it along.



## Basic floating principle

Floating does not require a ship shape or a pointed front; it only requires that:

- The object is **less dense** overall than the water it displaces (enough enclosed air space inside the box).
- The walls and bottom are sealed so water cannot easily get in (Genesis mentions pitch inside and out, which would make a wooden box watertight).

A sealed wooden rectangle full of air displaces a huge volume of water, and that upward force (buoyancy) keeps it afloat, even if it looks “clumsy.”

## Why can a box shape still work

For surviving a flood (not traveling anywhere):

- It does not need a pointed bow, rudder, or sail, because it is not meant to **go** anywhere; it only has to stay on top of the water and not roll over.
- Long, wide, low “barge” shapes are actually very stable in rough water; modern barges and cargo boxes on water are often basically floating rectangles.

So, as Genesis describes it, the Ark functions like a huge floating chest or barge: the wood and pitch provide a sealed shell, the empty space inside makes it lighter than the water it pushes aside, and the result is that the rectangular container simply rides on top of the flood until it comes to rest.