

In The Beginning Genesis 7-9 The Flood

Context: The history of mankind is marked and marred by sin. The great hope is that God sees us and our families and He is at work even in the midst of our sinful condition.

Structure: In these chapters we see the Lord save Noah and his family, the Lord judge the Earth, the Lord remembers Noah and his family, the Lord covenants with Noah and his family, and the Lord restores mankind.

Main Idea: In the midst of sin, God is still at work restoring and reconciling man to Himself. His covenant with sinful man reveals his mercy, grace and love.

Biblical Theology: God's plan has always been to reconcile and restore mankind.

Application: Are we worshiping and serving the One that restores and reconciles?

The Lord Saved Noah and His family 7:1-16

7:1 Then the Lord said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. 2 Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, 3 and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. 4 For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." **5 And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him.**

6 Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. 7 And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. 8 Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, 9 two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. 10 And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth. 11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. 12 And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. 13 On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, 14 they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. 15 They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. 16 And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. **And the Lord shut him in.**

How has the Lord provided for you and your family?

The Lord judged the Earth v.17-24

17 The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18 The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. 19 And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. 20 The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits[d] deep. 21 And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, **and all mankind**. 22 Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. 23 He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. 24 And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

How has the Lord saved you and your family?

The Lord remembered Noah 8:1-18

8:1 But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. 2 The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, 3 and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, 4 and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. 5 And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. 6 At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made 7 and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. 8 Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. 9 But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. 10 He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. 11 And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. 12 Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore. 13 In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. 14 In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. 15 Then God said to Noah, 16 “Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. 17 Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” 18 So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him. 19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

How has the Lord restored you and your family?

The Lord's covenant with Noah 8:20-9:17

20 Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. **21** And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. **22** While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."

9:1 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.**" **2** The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. **3** Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. **4** But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. **5** And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. **6** "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

7 And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it."

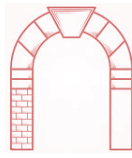
8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, **9** "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, **10** and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. **11** I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." **12** And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: **13 I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.** **14** When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, **15** I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. **16** When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." **17** God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

Where do you see the Lord's promises in you and your family?

The Lord reestablishes mankind v.18-28

18 The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) **19 These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.** 20 Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. 21 He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. 23 Then 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 backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. 24 When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, 25 he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." 26 He also said, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. 27 May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant." 28 After the flood Noah lived 350 years. 29 All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

How has the Lord worked in you and your family?



Keystone Commentary

The Flood

Genesis 7:17-8:19

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Application: Are we worshiping and serving the One that restores and reconciles?

Introduction: This section of Genesis chronicles Noah's time in the ark. Though forty days is usually associated with Noah, a closer look at Scripture notes that those in the ark stayed inside for over a year, even after they started to see evidence that land was appearing and even after Noah's assessment that the waters were gone. Not only is this an account of Noah's faithfulness and patience with regard to God, but it is also an account of God's faithfulness and mercy with regard to Noah and His creation.

Opening Question - Describe a time when you have had to wait upon the Lord?

Several times. While I was working at one school in particular, I was not having what I would call a successful time. The work and atmosphere was very oppressive on many different levels. I constantly prayed to God to show me what His purpose was for me being there, and eventually to get me out. I tried very hard to find a way out, but was not successful. Then one day out of the blue someone from the district office showed up and asked if I would be willing to work at the high school where I went to school and was only five minutes from my house. I did not hesitate to say yes. All that to say, I don't think I waited upon the Lord very well in the end, but none of my impatience did me any good. Thankfully, it did not do me any lasting harm either.

The Flood Continued... v.17-24

17 The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18 The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. 19 And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. 20 The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. 21 And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. 22 Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. 23 He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. 24 And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

vs.17-20 *The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep.*

These verses convey the totality of the flood that covered the earth. Notice the repetition of the words used to describe the flood: increased, prevailed, high, etc. The description leaves little room for any doubt that what God said would happen, happened just as He said. The entire earth is submerged in water from the waters under and above the earth which were poured out over a period of forty days.

All that remains of creation with the breath of life is on the little ark which from a contemporary perspective is literally sailing in the heavens as the highest mountain peak is fifteen cubits (over 22 feet) under water. Given that Mt. Everest is 29,031 feet tall, the ark would have been sailing 29,053 feet or 5 1/2 miles above the current oceans.

Some who would try to reconcile the stories of Genesis with what science says about nature and the origins of earth have said that what is depicted here is just a regional flood. Some of the other ancient cultures which have a flood myth do not state that the whole earth was flooded. It remains "possible" that what is presented is meant to be taken as hyperbole, which is used at times in Scripture. However, I think that the repetition and detail about the flood covering the whole earth, even to the point where the ark would have been able to sail over the highest mountain is meant to be understood as a literal description of the all encompassing nature of this cataclysmic event.

If you will recall from ch.1, this essentially puts the earth in much the same shape as it was in the beginning, totally covered with water.

vs.21-24 *And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.*

Having described the flood in more detail, Genesis moves to its result, the death of everything which had the breath of life. Note that this is the first time that the word death is used as a description of the consequence of the flood. This can be seen as a direct connection to the flood itself being a consequence of humanity's sin. Thus, sin, which brought on death, also brought on the flood, which also brought on death. They are all interconnected.

As with the totality of the flood, so too are its effects. All animal and human life on earth is wiped out.¹ Again, there is an abundance of repetition to illustrate this fact, but while this may be overkill for a modern reader, this leads to the point at the end of v.23 where only Noah and company remain. As such, Noah is the first example in Scripture of the idea of a remnant. Speaking of which, I think that is a good point to discuss...

1. What do you know of the idea of a remnant as it pertains to God and His people?

This was a very popular identification that the Jews had for themselves from the time of Moses, and they very much identified with Noah and his story. The idea is that God will always preserve His people, even if the number of the faithful is small. The Hebrews in the Exodus saw themselves in this way, and the idea reappears throughout Israel's history even among smaller groups of Israelites who recognized that most of their countrymen had turned away from God.

The idea also reappears in the New Testament and beyond with the early followers of Christ who were persecuted first by the Jews, then later by the Romans. Revelation gives the ultimate example of the remnant which is not as small as might otherwise be assumed. The total number of those preserved by God by the end is so many that John essentially states that their number is beyond counting. (Though as a percentage of the entirety of all the people that will have lived on the earth, I assume that it is far less than half).

¹ I would imagine that many birds would have tried to land on the ark, but after so many days without food, those few would have died of hunger.

This section concludes with the number of days that the waters stayed on the earth, 150. This usually doesn't get mentioned in the flood story, as forty days tends to overshadow it. While there might be some confusion about whether or not the forty days should be counted within the 150 or in addition to it, the answer will be made clear in the next chapter. In any case, the point is that this period of time is long enough for any creature who survived the storm to die of drowning, exhaustion, or starvation.

2. How have you learned to trust God through times of trouble?

Spurgeon, in one of his sermons, discussed the idea that by looking through the window of the past, we can more easily see the door of the future. His point was that for those of us who have been carried by God through trials and tribulations before, we can better trust in His ability and willingness to do so again.

That works to an extent for me, but there is no guarantee that when the flood of evil comes, that anyone, believer or not is going to be saved from it. Just ask the Christians who were thrown to the lions in the Colosseum or countless others who have lost their lives in the last 2,000 years. God does not promise us tomorrow, but what He does promise is even greater. If I don't live to see tomorrow, what I will live to see is a new life with Him in Heaven, recreated into something I cannot fully articulate in this life.

Reflection: How has the Lord saved you and your family?

The Lord Remembered Noah 8:1-5

1 But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. 2 The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, 3 and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, 4 and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. 5 And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

v.1a *But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark.*

In the midst of all the destruction that was brought about in God's vengeance, **ch.8** opens with two very simple, but profound words, "but God." The Lord had caused the flood and destruction of the entire earth, and had He not acted, that would be the way that things stood to this day. But in His mercy, He remembers Noah and those on the ark and will act to restore humanity and life to the earth.

However, this brings up a point which I think is worth discussing, and that is what does it mean for God to remember? Is this implying that in His destructive anger, He forgot about Noah, and all of a sudden looked down with an "oh, yeah..." kind of moment? If not, what is the point that is trying to be made here?

3. What does it mean when Scripture states that God remembers?

Again, I don't think that any believer in Almighty God would hold to the idea that He is capable of forgetting. Remembering in this sense, is not to be understood that God is all of a sudden calling to mind the plight of Noah, rather this is meant to be taken in light of God's covenant. By "remembering," He is now acting to fulfill the promise that He made to Noah.

In other cases, "remembering" is used as covenant language as it is here, but also as a response to the requests of God's people. With that in mind, I don't think that it is too much of a stretch to conclude that Noah and his family were doing a lot of praying while they were in the midst of the storm, or just drifting along day after day for almost half of a year.

v.1b-2 *And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained,*

In keeping with the original creation parallel, a wind (spirit/breath)² is again present over the waters of chaos. I don't think v.2 in this part of the flood story is a strictly chronological account in line with ch.7. Rather it is a retelling of the flood that serves as a reintroduction for Noah's eventual departure from the ark.

vs.3-5 *and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.*

In this passage, we do see some definite chronology. Genesis notes that the ark runs aground on one of the mountains of Ararat, though it is implied that the land still cannot be seen. The timing of this event on the seventeenth day of the month shows that exactly five months (150 days) had passed from the start of the rain to the waters receding to the point where the ark struck land. However, it would take a couple more months before the ark dwellers could actually see any land.

As far as where the ark actually landed, there is a Mt. Ararat today in eastern Turkey on its border with Iran, Syria, and Armenia. From the Middle ages, this was believed to be the landing place of the ark, and several attempts to find its remains have been made. However, this wasn't always the believed location, and to date no definitive evidence of the remains of the ark have been found anywhere.

² The Hebrew word "ruah" is used for wind, breath, and spirit, and it must be determined from the context of the passage, which meaning is to be understood. Since God is making this ruah, the best understanding is probably wind, but to imagine God blowing across the waters, and/or the Holy Spirit moving is not a bad image either, and certainly not out of the question.

The Raven and the Dove 8:6-12*

6 At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made 7 and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. 8 Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. 9 But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. 10 He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. 11 And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. 12 Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore. 13 In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. 14 In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. 15 Then God said to Noah, 16 “Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. 17 Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” 18 So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. 19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

v.6 *At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth.*

Here we read another time marker, at the end of forty days, which assumedly corresponds to the time when the mountain tops were seen. There have been several depictions of the ark in art and film, many of which have some sort of deck for Noah to go out on. However, the only place that the Bible describes as any opening other than the main door was a small window on the very low upper part of the ark. As such, it would not provide enough line of sight or vantage point for Noah to assess whether or not it was time to leave, but enough for him to see the new islands that were coming up as the water went down.

I guess there would be a certain point when the water dropped low enough for Noah not to be able to see it anymore from his window and would not know how long it was necessary to stay in the ark, so he comes up with an idea. If he releases a bird, he could judge whether or not the waters had receded enough to support life based on whether or not the bird returned or perhaps what it returned with. His first choice was a raven, which may or may not have spiritual significance.³ Looking at what happened, it was a bad choice as the bird seemed to want to have nothing to do with being cooped up in the ark if it could find any food anywhere else. Since ravens & crows have a larger diet, it could well be that it found some carrion meat somewhere to feast on.

³ The decision to release a raven may have had something to do with it being unclean, but if that were the case, then it was an even poorer choice, because if it died, there was only one other one left.

v.8 *Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him.*

There is no indication of the amount of time between Noah's release of the raven and the dove, but apparently Noah had an amount of time he was willing to wait before sending something else. Maybe it was seven days like the intervals with the doves. If so, it has now been forty-seven days since the first land appeared. Where the raven just took off, the dove could not find a place that was suitable for it to live and eat, so it returned. From this Noah concludes that the waters haven't gone down far enough.

vs.10-12 *He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.*

Noah waits another seven days and sends out the dove again. This time the bird returns with something, an olive leaf. Not only that, but one that was fresh, indicating that plant life had begun to grow once again. However, since the bird returned at all, Noah took that to mean that the waters hadn't receded far enough yet, so he waits another seven days. When he releases the dove a third time, she does not return. Noah takes this as a sign that she has found somewhere to make a nest and a source of food which would indicate that the earth has dried out enough to support the animals that he was carrying.

Regardless of any spiritual significance to the raven and the dove, Noah read and understood the meaning behind what they did. This leads me to an interesting question...

4. How do you interpret potential signs from God?

Very carefully... I think it is very easy to go to extremes either way about what could or couldn't be signs from God, especially if they are looked at a specific directions. That is not to say that I have not thrown out several fleeces during my time, looking for a sign. All that said, I think that any encounter we have with another person is not by chance. It is a divine appointment, where we get the chance to demonstrate God's love and share His message in one way or the other. That is probably the most important "sign" that we should be looking for.

Regarding more specific indicators, the Bible is a really good place to look for God's direction and/or confirm that the direction we are headed is in or out of His will. However, regarding major life changes, the method that I have learned to adopt is that as long as I am being faithful in doing the spiritual part of what God would have me do, He will place me where he wants me to be using circumstances that are not in my control. (Granted, I may have missed some "signs" along the way, but that has shown to be a pretty good way of doing life).

v.13 *In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry.*

Again, Genesis presents a time marker, but this one has the six-hundred and first year in it. Though Noah's name is not mentioned in connection with it, it can be assumed that this is the first day of the first month of the 601st year of Noah's life. Nothing else really makes much sense, and it does correspond to v.7:11 which marks the entry of Noah in the ark in the same way.

It was at this point that Noah decided to take the roof off of the ark. (I would have to assume that it had not rained since the flood, so there was little worry about that happening). The description here that the earth was dry is presented more as Noah's appraisal from atop the mountain rather than an actual fact. The patriarch gets his first look at the earth in almost a year and to his amazement, (*"behold"*) the earth looks dry.

Though Scripture doesn't drive this point home, do not miss that Noah has been in the ark for almost a year by this point, and when he looks around from the roof, things look right. I don't know how tempted he was to leave, but I'm sure that the thought crossed his mind. Though he walked with God, he was still human. However, because he walked with God, he knew it was best to wait until God's time was right.

v.14 *In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out.*

However, even with the roof/covering gone, and his assessment that the earth is ready for him and his animals, Noah continues to wait. Not until the time in **v.14** is the earth completely rid of the destructive waters of the flood. Going back to **v.7:11**, Noah and company entered the ark on the seventeenth day of the second month, and have now been inside the vessel for twelve months and ten days, though for the last month and a half, they have been able to get some sunlight...

Noah Finally Leaves the Ark 8:15-19

15 Then God said to Noah, 16 “Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. 17 Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” 18 So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. 19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

v.15 *Then God said to Noah, “Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you.*

Though from Noah's estimation the earth was dry when he looked at it, it is important to note that this man who walked with God did not leave his ark until God told him it was time to do so. This is the third time that God is recorded as having spoken to Noah, and as per usual there is no record of Noah's response. Some scholars have concluded that this indicates that from the time of the flood until now, God was silent towards Noah, but that need not be the case. While there certainly is a lesson in patiently waiting on the Lord, I think the intended lesson is that Noah did not act until he was specifically commanded to do so by God.

The statement from God is specific, as I'm sure that Noah would have followed God's command to the letter. He is told to leave the ark along with the specific members of his family, which also serves to mirror God's command for all of them to enter the ark.

v.17 *Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.”*

Not only are they to leave, but Noah is to also release all of the creatures that he has faithfully kept for over a year. Note that upon their release, they are once “reminded” of the blessing that God gave to them in the beginning, to be fruitful and multiply. Though this command is specifically given to them, Noah may have also assumed that also included his family as well. If not, God will make that clear to his faithful servant a little later in the story.

vs.18-19 *So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.*

While these verses may sound redundant to modern readers, their purpose is to once again illustrate Noah and his family's faithfulness in following God's commands. It also shows that God was faithful to keep His promise to the residents of the ark that they were still alive after ordeal and were capable of not only leaving but going on to thrive as God intended.

5. Regardless of where you are in your faith, what steps can you take to be more obedient to God?

I think the first step in obedience is knowing what is expected. This would mean that you would need to read and study the Bible more. Also, hanging out with people who are obedient to God would be a good idea. There are a lot of those at church. Prayer is another good answer here. As always, these Sunday school answers to these types of questions are simple, but in actuality they require discipline. This is the discipline of Noah, who walked with God, that allowed him to not only endure the trial of being in the ark for a year, but also be chosen by God to do it.

Reflection: How has the Lord restored you and your family?

Conclusion: Spurgeon - (The Weary Dove's Return)

Noah knew that God would in due time let him out of the ark. He was quite sure that the Lord had not put him into the ark to make a great coffin of it, that he and all those living creatures that went in with him should perish there, and because he believed in God, therefore he removed the covering of the ark and looked abroad, expecting by and by to see not only the tops of the mountains, but also a dry and green earth once more. True faith often goes to the window. If your faith turns her face to the wall and expects nothing, I do not think it is genuine faith. Faith has eyes and therefore she looks afar off, and she often watches as the watchman of the night looks for the gray dawn of the morning.

Having prayed, and having believed, let us expect, let us open the window and look out. God never failed an expectant people yet, but a great many of His people fail to expect, and if you do not expect, you are not likely to receive. David said, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him," and when your expectation is from Him, it will not be disappointed.

It is a great pity when we keep the shutters up so that we cannot look out of the window to see the dry land... because Noah expected the earth to be dry, he sent out the raven, and when the raven did not answer his purpose, he sent out the dove. After the dove came back with no tidings, he waited seven days, and then sent her out again. And when she returned with only an olive leaf in her mouth, he waited seven days more, and then sent her out again.

Oh, dear friends, often send out your doves! Be looking for blessings, you have asked for them, God has promised to give them, send out your doves to see whether the blessings are not there, and if you do so constantly, and perseveringly, verily, I say unto you, you shall have your reward. Still, notice that Noah, when he had the best evidence that he could get that the earth was dry, did not dare to go out of the ark till God opened the door.

So, gather all the information you possibly can about your position, and act according to the rules of commonsense, but after you have done that, still wait upon God. When you know from your ravens and your doves that the earth is getting dry, do not come out till He that shut the door opens it for you.

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