

Genesis 7

The report of Noah's flood continues in this chapter with the command to save the animals, the entrance into the ark, and the tremendous amount of water that is released over the earth. If we understand the chronology of the genealogy correctly from chapter 5, then Adam's grandson Enos was still alive when Noah was born, as were: Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Methuselah, and Noah's father, Lamech. Methuselah seems to have died the year the flood came, if not in the flood and Lamech died a few years before the flood, perhaps around the time Noah began building the ark.

TRANSLATION - 7:1-5:

1 Then Jehovah said to Noah, "Come, yourself, and all your house to the ark because you I see righteous before My face in this generation. **2** From all the clean animals take for yourself seven [and] seven male and female and from the animals which [are] not clean, this [in] twos, male and female. **3** Even from the bird of the heavens seven [and] seven male and female to preserve seed on the face of all the earth. **4** Because from the days until seven, I myself [am] causing it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights and I will blot out all the substance which I made from on the face of the land." **5** So Noah did according to all which Jehovah commanded.

WORDS:

"House" (ver. 1) carries the connotation of "household" or "family." "Generation" (ver 1) is found 167x. It is a different word than "generation" in 6:9. In a narrow way, "generation" refers to the period of time from a man's birth to the birth of his children. More broadly, it can refer to the man's life as a whole. In a generic sense, it can refer to an indefinite period of time. "Clean" (ver. 2) and its related words, verb and nouns, are found 203x throughout the OT (60% in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers). It can mean "clean, pure, genuine" in both a physical way and a moral way. "Male and female" in verse 2 are actually the words "man" and "his wife." Here, it clearly refers to male and female animals. "Seven seven" seems clearly to suggest there were to be seven *pairs* of clean animals, seven males and seven females. "Blot out" (ver. 4) is used 34x. It can mean "wipe off" (such as one's mouth) or "wipe out" in the sense of annihilate or destroy. "Substance" (ver. 4) is found also in 7:23 but otherwise, only in Deut. 11:6, where it also refers to God destroying disobedient people.

GRAMMAR:

"I myself" (ver. 4) is emphatic. "Causing it to rain" (ver. 4) is a *hiphil* participle. "Preserve" (ver. 3) is the verb "to be alive," in the *piel* stem, which carries the idea "to keep alive" or "preserve."

COMMENTARY:

The destruction of the flood is going to be described in terms that suggest the undoing of creation. If that is so, then Noah is going to be a "second" Adam. Humanity is going to start over with Noah. While Noah did not *earn* salvation through the ark, it was his righteousness that motivated God to give him this command to build the ark. It was God's gracious call to Noah (6:8). It is also evident that a righteous man obeys God in all His details (cf. 6:22; 7:5). It is an honor for God to designate someone as "righteous."

Noah was to take plenty of clean animals for food and for sacrifice. It is clear that the distinction between "clean" and "unclean" animals predates the Law of Moses by many years. Other ANE religions did not make a distinction between "clean" and "unclean" animals, especially as it relates to diets. In 6:19-20, Noah was told to bring the animals by "twos." Here, the term is "seven seven" (literally) which suggests seven *pairs*, seven male and seven female. Some, however, interpret it to mean seven *total*. Be that as it may, these extra animals were for sacrifice (8:20) and food (9:3).

God gives Noah seven days warning before He unleashes the proverbial floodgates of water on the earth. Just because “forty” is used in other parts of the Scriptures as a symbolic number, particularly in the prophets, does not mean it is figurative here. The exact numbers in our text argues for its historicity. God promised to blot out all life (6:7) and He is doing so (7:4-5, 23).

APPLICATION:

Contemporaries in the text - The definition of “righteous” is to be and do what is right by God’s definition. In 6:22 and 7:5, we are told why Noah was “righteous.” He did what God commanded him to do. Again, as we see through this chapter, there was no questioning on Noah’s part. He did what God told him to do.

Contemporaries of Moses’ day - When Moses requires Israel to distinguish between clean and unclean animals (Lev. 11), Israel would have had a long history of making such distinctions. From a spiritual and ritualistic perspective, only people who were clean could participate in worship (Lev. 7:19-20; 1 Sam. 20:26; Ezra 6:20; 2 Chron. 30:17-19). Moses prayed, following the creation of the golden calf, that God would “blot out” his name from the book of life for the sake of Israel (Exo. 32:32-33). God will threaten to “blot out” Israel for her sins (Deut. 9:14; 29:20).

Later Hebrew writers - Outside of Genesis, Noah is mentioned in the genealogy of 1 Chronicles 1:4, Isaiah 54:9, and Ezekiel 14:14, 20. Isaiah uses the events of Noah’s day to illustrate the strength of God’s promises. Ezekiel uses Noah to show that Israel was past the point of no return, as was the world in Noah’s day. The tribe of Benjamin was nearly “blotted out” (Judges 21:17) and God would almost do the same to later Israel (2 Kings 21:13). David will pray that his sins will be “blotted out” (Psa. 51:3, 9).

NT writers - Noah is listed in the genealogy of Jesus in Luke 3:36. Jesus references the flood of Noah’s day in Matthew 24:37-38 and Luke 17:26-27. Noah obeyed in faith (Heb. 11:7) as he preached God’s judgment and mercy (2 Peter 2:5). Peter also refers to Noah’s flood in 1 Peter 3:20-21, as he compares salvation through baptism with salvation through the ark.

TRANSLATION - 7:6-16:

6 When Noah, [was] a son of six hundred years, the flood of waters was on the earth. **7** So Noah came, his sons, and his wife, and his sons wives with him, to the ark from the face of the waters of the flood. **8** From the clean animal and from the animal which was not clean, and from the bird and all which creeped on the land. **9** Two [and] two they came to Noah, to the ark male and female just as God commanded Noah. **10** And it happened, seven days and the day of the flood was on the earth. **11** In the year of the sixth hundred year of the life of Noah, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month in that day, there burst open all the springs of the deep, and the windows of the heavens were opened. **12** Then there was rain on the earth forty days and forty nights. **13** In that same day, Noah came and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and the wife of Noah and the three wives of his sons with him to the ark. **14** These and all the animals after their kind and all the beasts after their kind and all the creeping things creeping on the earth after their kind and every bird after its kind, all the birds with wings. **15** And they came to Noah, to the ark, two [and] two from all the flesh which in it [was] the breath of life. **16** They were coming, male and female, from all flesh they came just as God commanded him and Jehovah closed [the door] behind him.

WORDS:

“Flood” is used 13x, all but one in this context. It is a distinctive word for the flood of Noah’s day. “Burst forth” (ver. 11; 51x) means to “split, breach, or rip open.” “Springs” (ver. 11) and “deep” (ver. 11; see 1:2 and comments there) are found in Amos 7:4, Isa. 51:10 and Psa. 36:6; 78:15. “Windows of heaven” is found in Isa. 24:18 and Malachi 3:10. “Rain” (ver. 12) is found 35x. This is its first occurrence and, coupled with 2:6, many believe that this is the first

time it had ever rained on the earth. “In that same day” (ver. 13) is literally “bone of the day,” an expression which means at that exact time. The first “bird” (ver. 14; 71x) is a different word than the second “bird” (40x). The first word is the generic word for a flying creature, whose cognate word is the verb to “fly.” The second word, conceptually subordinate to the first word, is related to the verb to “chirp,” so it refers to birds themselves. “Breath” (ver. 15) is “spirit” (*ruah*), which God warned He would withdraw (6:3).

GRAMMAR:

In verse 9, the text reads “two two” but we believe Moses is still referring to male and female pairs, even though the phrase (“seven seven”) is similar in verse 2, which we interpret as seven *pairs*. “Burst forth” (ver. 11) is *niphal*. “Were opened” (ver. 11) is *niphal*. “They” (ver. 14) is emphatic.

COMMENTARY:

God keeps His word. Always.

When the “windows of heaven” were opened, the expanse was opened up. Apparently this expanse kept waters above it, which now unleashes a deluge from above. The “deep,” which we saw created in Genesis 1, also burst forth, unleashing a deluge of water from below. The windows of heaven and the deep will both close in 8:2, which will cause the rain to stop.

Moses is very precise in the dating of the flood, its start, its duration, and its termination. Only Ezekiel in his prophecies has as much temporal precise as the flood account. This argues for its historicity and authenticity. The first date (7:11) and the last date (8:14) show that the flood lasted one year and eleven days. Highlight these dates in your Bible: 7:4, 11, 12; 8:4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14.

Verse 14 provides so much repetition from chapter 1, we are compelled to see this event as an undoing of the creation of God.

Jehovah God closed the door. On one hand, that was an act of grace toward Noah. God was shutting out the pain and destruction from the outside and saving Noah on the inside. But by the same token, it was an act of holy justice, sealing the doom of the disobedient on the outside. We do not wonder why God kept control of the door in His own hands. Only those would be saved who responded in faith and obedience. It would not be left up to the imperfect and fleeting emotions of judgment of humanity to decide who would be saved when. God kept the decision of salvation and judgment in His own hands.

APPLICATION:

Contemporaries of Moses’ day - God will “split open” the waters of the Red Sea (Exo. 14:16). Rains are necessary for human life and the OT pictured rain as a blessing from God while withholding rain was a curse from God (Deut. 11:11-12, 14, 17).

Later Hebrew writers - Asaph writes that God “broke open springs and torrents” in Psa. 74:15 but it is not clear if he had in mind the creation, or the flood, or the power of God in general.

NT writers - Peter is consistent with Moses in stating that there were eight souls saved (1 Peter 3:20). Peter also refers to the destruction of the world by the flood in 2 Peter 3:5-6 as he anticipates the coming destruction of the world by fire (3:10-12).

TRANSLATION - 7:17-24:

17 And the flood happened for forty days on the earth and the waters multiplied and lifted the ark and it rose above the earth. **18** Then the waters prevailed and multiplied greatly on the earth and the ark floated on the face of the waters. **19** The waters prevailed greatly, greatly on the earth and covered all the high mountains which [were] under all the heavens. **20** Fifteen cubits from above they prevailed the waters and they covered the mountains.

21 Then all flesh perished, the crawling thing on the earth, the bird and in the wild animal, and life and in every creeping thing creeping on the earth and every man. **22** All which

[had] the breath of the spirit of life in its nose from all which [was] on dry land died. **23** So He blotted out all substance which [was] on the face of the land from man to wild animal unto creeping thing and to birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth and there was left only Noah and who [were] with him in the ark. **24** So the waters prevailed on the earth, one hundred and fifty days.

WORDS:

“Prevailed” (ver. 18, 19, 20, 24) is a military term (cf. Exo. 17:11 and its context), the verb related to the word “warriors” from 6:4. The verb “floated” (ver. 18) is the typical verb “to walk.” “Greatly” is found twice in verse 19, which emphasizes its depth and power. This is the fourteenth time “to die” is found in Genesis, illustrating the power that Adam’s disobedience has had over the earth. “Crawling thing” is used 17x, 10x in Genesis (cf. 1:20). It overlaps in some way with “creeping thing” (29x, 12x in Leviticus) which was used in the creation account (1:26, 28;), and seems to consistently mean “swarm,” but we don’t know how they differed. “Left” (ver. 23) is the verb, which with its noun, are used later in Scripture for the “remnant” which stayed faithful to God. The verb to “remain, be left over, survive” is used 133x; the abstract noun “remnant” is used especially in the prophets Isaiah (27x), Jeremiah (42x), and Ezekiel (11x). The concrete noun “remainder” is used 26x so that the word family is an important biblical theme.

GRAMMAR:

“The creeping thing” (ver. 21) is a participle, following its cognate noun. “Blotted out” in verse 23 is *niphal*.

COMMENTARY:

The first paragraph (verses 17-20) emphasizes over and over again the amount of water that was on the earth. Again, we fail to see how someone could read this account and not believe Moses intended to convey a worldwide flood. In those four verses, we have counted ten different verbs and adverbs Moses uses to accentuate the amount of water on the earth. The second point he emphasizes is that the ark was safe. The waters lifted the ark and the ark floated. A boat’s draft is the distance a boat will sink when it is fully loaded, half its height. Since the ark was thirty cubits (6:15), it would draft fifteen cubits, which means the ark would have passed over the tops of these mountains. We do not have to imagine that these mountains were the same height that mountains are today because this flood, as we have seen, caused geological upheavals never before seen nor seen since.

The emphasis in the second paragraph, verses 21-24, is the death that resulted from the flood waters. Verse 21 begins (actually, the second word) with “all” and then lists various animal life on earth and says, “all flesh perished,” including all mankind. Then verse 22 begins with “all” and says “all” which had the breath of the spirit of life and uses the verb “died.” Verse 23 uses twice the key verb “blotted out” which God had promised He would do (cf. 6:7; 7:4). Only Noah was left, safe on the ark. From verse 22, “breath” and “nostrils” again recalls chapter 2:7. Because God is the one who gives life, He is sovereign over life and has the power to take it away. This “spirit” of the breath of life suggests to some that “spirit” which God threatened to take away (cf. 6:3). But here, the “spirit” is what was in the created life while in 6:3, it was God’s Spirit which would be taken away. Apparently the forty days were followed by the 110 days of the waters on the earth, before they began receding.

God had promised that He would “blot out” (6:7) and that’s exactly what He has done. God does not utter pointless words.

APPLICATION:

Contemporaries in the text - If you wish to lay out a chronology of the flood, note these verses: 7:4, 10, 12, 17, 24; 8:3, 6-7, 10, 12. Noah’s contemporaries could have and should

have went on the ark. We do not know if, once it started raining, the door was already closed. If so, man's fate was sealed. If not, we can hardly imagine not rushing into the ark.

Contemporaries of Moses' day - Israel should have learned from the account of the flood that God does not tolerate disobedience. Death is the end result of disobedience, whether on a universal scale or on an individual level. Noah's obedience saved him in the ark and Israel's obedience would be necessary for them to remain in the Promised Land (Lev. 18:4-5; 20:22; 25:18; Deut. 4:40; 30:16). The same point is emphasized in Israel's poetic literature (Psa. 119:17; Prov. 4:4; 7:2).

Later Hebrew writers - "Left" is the word used for the "remnant" of Israel by the prophets (Isa. 37:4; Zech. 8:6, 11, 12). They, too, will emphasize the necessity of obedience to the Law of God if Israel is going to succeed.

NT writers - Paul also writes of the "remnant" of Israel (Rom. 11:25-29). They believed and accepted Jesus Christ once He came and made Himself known. However, it is also the case that, compared to the number of people who will be born and die, that only a "remnant" few will be saved (Matt. 7:13-14). Obedience is the key. We direct your attention, again, to Jesus' references to the flood of Noah's day in Matthew 24:37-38 and Luke 17:26-27.