

Genesis 8

Noah, his family, and the animals have been on the ark for 150 days at a minimum, before God acts to bring them off the ark. Once Noah and the animals exit the ark, he worships, which is not the first act of worship in the Bible, but it will be the first altar and the first burnt offering. God will then promise that He will not destroy the earth again with water. The next (and final) worldwide destruction, with the flood as its prototype, will be the destruction by fire (2 Peter 3:10-12).

TRANSLATION - 8:1-4:

1 Then God remembered Noah and every animal and every wild animal which [was] with him in the ark and God caused to blow a wind on the earth and the waters subsided. **2** And the springs of the deep were closed and the windows of the heavens and the rains finished from the heavens. **3** And the waters receded from on the earth to move and to recede and the waters decreased at the end of 150 days. **4** Then the ark rested in the seventh month, in the seventeenth day of the month on the mountains of Ararat.

WORDS:

“Remembered” (ver. 1) is used 235x. With God as the subject, it carries the idea of remembering in order to do something. “Receded” (ver. 3) is the word “return” that is also translated frequently as “repent.” “Decreased” (ver. 3) is used 22x. The verb “rested” (ver. 4) is related to the name “Noah.” That is, the same three root letters are found in both words.

GRAMMAR:

“Caused to blow” (ver. 1) is a *hiphil*. “Were closed” (ver. 2) is *niphal*. “Finished” is also *niphal*. “To move” and “to return” are both infinitive absolutes; here, they are used to intensify the action.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

Ararat is a mountain range in Armenia, in eastern Turkey, near Lake Van. Moses does not try to describe the exact location of the ark’s resting place. It is pointless to speculate and pointless to try to find the ark. For later references to Ararat, see 2 Kings 19:37; Isaiah 37:38; Jeremiah 51:27.

COMMENTS:

“Then God remembered Noah” breaks the monotony and the routine of the time spent in the ark. God has not forgotten; He has not left Noah to fend for himself. God remembered Noah and God always acts when He “remembers.” This is not a “recalling to mind” but it is acknowledgment that man needs God’s assistance. God had promised a covenant with Noah (6:18) and God is now acting on that covenant. Noah will not act, in fact, before he hears a word from God. The whole text echoes, in many ways, the creation of the world from chapter 1 but also reflects the undoing of the destruction from chapter 7. Verse 2 is an undoing of the act of 7:11-12. Verse 5 is a reversal of the actions recorded in 7:19-20.

The fact that God caused the wind to blow shows that God was behind the destruction of the flood from the very beginning. It was under His sovereignty from beginning to end. From the wind that God sent, the waters began to recede, to evaporate, to fill oceans which were probably newly created from the geological upheavals caused in 7:11-12. Once the tops of the mountains were visible, the ark would eventually come to rest, which it did in the mountains of Ararat.

APPLICATION -

Contemporaries in the text - Noah and his wife and family were busy in the ark, taking care of the animals, patiently waiting for God to act again.

Contemporaries in Moses' day - God remembers His people (Exo. 2:24) and preserves them (Lev. 26:44-45). God will dry up the waters at the Red Sea (Exo. 14:26, 28) and at the Jordan River (Josh. 4:18).

Later Hebrew writers - God could remember sins (Hosea 7:1-2) or He could choose not to remember sins (Psa. 79:8-9; Isa. 43:25).

NT writers - The Hebrew writer, citing Jeremiah 31:31-34, states that God can and will forgive sins (Heb. 8:12; 10:17).

TRANSLATION - 8:5-12:

5 The waters were to move and to decrease on the tenth month, the tenth month, the first of the month there appeared the tips of the mountains. **6** Then it was from the end of the forty days that Noah opened the window of the ark which he made. **7** Then he sent a raven and it flew to fly and to return until to dry up the waters from on the earth. **8** Then he sent a dove from him to see [if] the waters subsided from on the face of the land. **9** But the dove did not find a resting place for the sole of her foot and she returned to him, to the ark because the waters on the face of all the earth and he extended his hand and took her and he brought her to himself to the ark. **10** Then he waited until seven more days and again to send the dove from the ark. **11** And the dove came to him at evening time and behold (!) a torn olive leaf [was] in her mouth and Noah knew that the waters had subsided from on the earth. **12** Then he waited until seven more days and he sent the dove and it did not ever return to him again.

WORDS:

"Tips" (ver. 5) is, literally "heads." "Window" (ver. 6) is the normal word for window, not the same word used in 6:16. A "raven" (ver. 7) fed Elijah in 1 Kings 17:4, 6 (cf. Job 38:41; Song 5:11). To "dry up" is used 59x. "Dove" (ver. 8) is related to the name "Jonah." A dove is found 32x in the OT. "Subsided" (ver. 8) is used here in the text with different meanings. In verses 8, 11, it suggests the idea of "to make small, insignificant" or subside. In verse 21, however, it means to "curse" or to "lighten" or "treat with contempt." The word family is used 128x.

"Extended" (ver. 9) is the same verb as "sent" used in the same context. "Resting place" (ver. 9) is also related to "Noah." "Again" (ver. 10, 12) is a verb, "to repeat." "Ever" and "again" repeat two words which have similar meanings. The verb "to repeat" is actually a cognate word with the name "Joseph." The adverb "again" is also at the end of the sentence. The point in verse 12 is that the dove never came back to the ark the second time.

GRAMMAR:

"To move" and "to diminish" (ver. 5) are both infinite absolutes, signifying the strong reversal of the destructive waters of the flood. "There appeared" (ver. 5) is *niphal*. "Sent" (ver. 7) is *piel*. As we have seen before, "flew" and "to fly" are both forms of the same verb, the first a *qal*, the second, an infinitive absolute. "To return" (ver. 7) is an infinitive construction, signifying moving back and forth almost non-stop. "Brought" (ver. 9) is *hiphil*. "Waited" (ver. 10) is *hiphil*. "Sent" (ver. 12) is a *piel*.

COMMENTS:

The world in which Noah stepped, coming out of the ark, was a very different world than the one he had last seen before the flood. Can you imagine the destruction that was caused from water *dropping down out of the skies* with destructive force coupled with the waters *spewing up out of the earth* with equally destructive force? Can you imagine this happening for forty days? Can you imagine the winds that were caused and the erosive effects on the land surface of this quantity of water coupled with the winds, for 150 days? Then, can

you imagine the destructive forces caused by the winds and the erosive effects of the water as they receded for another seven months? Remember, Noah was in the ark for a year and eleven days. That is a long time and a lot of water which changed drastically the surface of the earth.

Noah opened the window (a different word is used in 6:16; we do not know why) and sent out a raven. A raven is a scavenger, an unclean bird according to the Law of Moses (Lev. 11:15; Deut. 14:14). This means that there were only two ravens to begin with. The raven could survive off carrion. It did not return to Noah. Secondly, Noah sent a dove, a clean animal (Lev. 1:14; 12:6) of which he had fourteen, which did not find a place to land and returned to Noah. A week later, Noah sent the dove a second time. This time, the dove returned with the piece of an olive leaf in her mouth. The olive branch is, now, universally recognized as a symbol of peace. Once the dove returned with the olive leaf, Noah knew that plant life was now beginning to show itself. When Noah let the dove out again, this time, it did not return to him.

APPLICATION -

Contemporaries in the text - There is no communication from God in this paragraph. Noah sends out a raven, waits seven days and sends out the dove the first time, waits another seven days, and sends out the dove again. This time, he knows there is land. Patiently waiting describes Noah's life on the ark.

Contemporaries in Moses' time - We presume the raven was unclean in Noah's day and the dove was clean. That is how the Law categorizes them: the raven (Lev. 11:15; Deut. 14:14) and the dove (Lev. 1:14; 12:6).

NT writers - It could be the message of peace, assurance, and new birth from this event in Noah's life that caused God to have the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus in the form of a dove (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32). Observe that this event is one of the few events that is recorded by all four Gospel writers. The dove was also a symbol of innocence and gentleness (Matt. 10:16).

TRANSLATION - 8:13-19:

13 Then it happened in the first and six hundredth year, in the first [month], in the first [day] of the month, the waters dried up from on the earth and Noah removed the cover of the ark and saw and behold (!) they were dried up from the land. **14** In the second month, the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth dried up. **15** Then God spoke to Noah saying, **16** "Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons, and the wives of your sons with you. **17** All life which [is] with you from all flesh, bird and animal, and all creeping things creeping on the earth, bring out with you and they will increase in the earth and they will be fruitful and they will multiply on the earth." **18** So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife, and the wives of his sons with him. **19** All life, every creeping thing, every bird, every crawling thing on the earth, after their kinds, they went out from the ark.

WORDS:

"Dried up" (ver. 13, twice) and "dried up" (ver. 14) are different verbs. This latter verb was used in 8:7. "Increase" (ver. 17) means to "swarm."

GRAMMAR:

"Removed" (ver. 13) is *hiphil*. The verb "go out" (ver. 16) and the verb "bring out" (ver. 17) are the same verb; the second is *hiphil* which is causative - "cause to go out."

COMMENTS:

Finally, after that year, Noah lifted the covering from the ark. We do not know exactly what type of covering this was for the ark. The word has not been introduced yet in the text.

But, Noah was able to see a broad expanse of the world around the ark. The waters had dried up. Three times in verses 13-14, Moses notes that the water was gone. It was dried up.

We note that as far as exiting the ark, Noah does nothing until God speaks. It has been at least a year since God spoke to Noah, a year of silence on the ark. So Noah just waited. Now, God tells Noah to leave; so then Noah leaves. Noah, his family, and all the animals, in a detailed list, are to exit the ark and begin multiplying as God had commanded them at the creation (1:22, 28). We notice in verse 17 that there are three verbs which relate to the reproduction of the animals and their repopulation. God wanted the animals (and man) to reproduce and spread out across the earth.

Verse 18 records Noah's obedience. No words. Just obedience. Verses 18-19 record the complete disembarkation from the ark. For all practical purposes, the ark was now empty. The world had been saved.

APPLICATION:

Contemporaries in the text - We note again that Noah obeys what God commands.

Contemporaries in Moses' day - The Israelites would be impressed, as we are, with the destructive nature of the flood, with God's gracious actions of saving Noah and his family, and Noah's steadfast dependence on God's word.

TRANSLATION - 8:20-22:

20 So Noah built an altar to Jehovah and took from every clean animal and from every bird clean and offered a burnt offering on the altar. **21** Then Jehovah smelled the smell of the pleasing [thing] and Jehovah said to His heart, "I will not again curse ever the land for the sake of man because the thought of the heart of man [is] evil from his youth and I will not again ever strike all life just as I did. **22** Still all the days of the earth, seed and harvest and cold and heat and summer and autumn and day and night will not stop."

WORDS:

"Build" is used 377x, making it a significant word in the OT. It was first used of God "building" the woman from Adam's side in 2:22. "Offered" (894x) and "burnt offering" (ver. 20; 286x) are cognate words. A word closely related to burnt offering is "holocaust." "Smelled" (14x) and "scent" (ver. 21; 58x) are also cognate words. "Pleasing" (ver. 21; 43x) is used especially of the sacrifices in Leviticus and Numbers. It is also a cognate word with "Noah" and can mean "quieting or soothing." "Heart" (ver. 21) is used here of Jehovah God, an anthropomorphism, describing God in human terms. God is spirit (John 4:24) and a spirit does not have flesh and bone (Luke 24:39). God's "heart" is His affections toward man. "Curse" (ver. 21) is not the same word used in Genesis 3:14, 17; this is a more milder form, "treat lightly, disdain." "Youth" (ver. 21) is found 46x. "Stop" (ver. 22) is the verb translated in 2:2-3 "to cease / rest." Verse 22 sets up a series of contrasts in a figure of speech called merism, which shows totality.

GRAMMAR:

"Offered" (ver. 20) is a *hiphil*. "Smelled" (ver. 21) is *hiphil*. "Again" (ver. 21) is a verb which means to repeat something. "Curse" (ver. 21) is a *piel*, but not the same word as in Genesis 3. "Strike" (ver. 21) is *hiphil*.

COMMENTS:

When Noah steps off the ark, the first thing he does is worship. He builds an altar, the first of its kind in Scripture, and he sacrifices clean animals. This altar was likely built of stone. Again, we can ask the same questions relative to worship that we asked in chapter 4 with Cain and Abel. Apparently God communicated what He wanted from Noah, including the definition of clean and unclean animals. The offering Noah offered was the burnt offering, in which the

whole animal was consumed. That was an act of faith on Noah's part and this act of worship, not related to sin or atonement, must have been simply an act of thanksgiving.

Moses notes God's acceptance of Noah's worship by describing it in terms of smell. To say that God found the scent "pleasing" is to say that God accepted Noah's worship. God's assessment of man's heart (ver. 21) is the same as it was before the flood (6:5). God has shown His destructive power which will serve as a prototype of the coming destruction of the whole world. Yet, man is man and man will sin. Since the heart of man is evil from youth, society will always be plagued by sin, violence, and corruption. Yet, God promises that the seasonal and daily rotations will now continue as He had originally planned, without any further interruptions. God starts over with a new creation.

APPLICATION -

Contemporaries in the text - Noah could not help but worship God after having been blessed with salvation. The prime motivating factor behind worship is thankfulness.

Contemporaries in Moses' day - When Israel built its altar and worshiped God according to His regulations, the sacrifices were a pleasing smell to Jehovah God (Exo. 29:18, 38-42; Lev. 1:9). Sacrifices are considered a "pleasing aroma" frequently in Leviticus (17x) and Numbers (18x). It was possible for God to not find their sacrifices "pleasing" if they were offered from a life of disobedience (Lev. 26:31). Burnt offerings were an integral part of the Law of Moses (Lev. 3:16; 12:6-8; 15:14-15, 29-30; Num. 6:10-11; 15:3).

Later Hebrew writers - David suggested, while running from King Saul, that David's life was not acceptable to God, He would not find David's worship "pleasing" (1 Sam. 26:19). Indeed, Amos warns that God could reject their worship because of disobedience (5:21-22). The salvation of Noah through the ark is a pattern for God offering salvation even while He expresses His wrath against sin (Isa. 54:9).

NT writers - As with Noah waiting patiently in the ark for a year, James calls on Christians to wait patiently and stay faithful (5:7-11). Christ's sacrifice to God was a "pleasing" smell to Him (Eph. 5:2). Paul will write in Philippians 4:18 that the Christians' offering was a sacrifice, a "pleasing" smell to him. Related to verse 22, the regular weather cycle is evidence of God's love for mankind and His provision for their good (Acts 14:17).