

PART 4: The Beginning of Covenants

The fourth part of our Genesis Bible study will cover 6:1—9:29 and deal the beginning of covenants between God and man. The first covenant will come about after the Great Flood and will be an expressing of God's desire not to punish us for our sin but deliver us from our bondage to sin. This will be accompanied by God's first promise to man—never to destroy the earth again by flood. The Great Flood of destruction is a direct result of another flood—a flood of sin that has inundated the world. God has placed man in a world created for man, but man has corrupted the world with sin. God has created man to be in a relationship with God, but man has rejected that relationship and separated himself from God. God now regrets what He has made and elects to do a “do over.”

Chapter 6: The Corruption of Mankind:

The sin of Adam and Eve caused them to be separated from the Garden of Eden and resulted in their lives being more difficult. When their son, Cain, murdered his brother, Abel, Cain became separated even from God and forced to wander with no place to call home. Apparently, man's digression into evil and wickedness continues to get worse to the point that God will regret having made man, and will decide to destroy all flesh.

Verses 1 & 2: *“Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.”*

There is much controversy regarding the phrase “sons of God” both in this passage and also in 6:4. Some simply read this as a reference to “men,” but others see the phrase as a reference to “fallen angels.” The particular Hebrew phrase is found in only four verses in the entire Old Testament. Those include the verses here in Genesis 6:2 and 6:4 and two verses in Job 1:6 and 2:1. Both uses in Job include Satan among the “sons of God” that “came to present themselves before the Lord.” If those presenting themselves are like Satan then this reference to the “sons of God” is likely a reference to fallen angels. The Hebrew word translated as “chose” literally means “to prove, distinguish or select.” The inferred meaning is that these “sons of God” chose or “picked from the best” of the women born from mankind. We will discuss this in more detail in our review of verse 4.

Verses 3: *“Then the Lord said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’”*

God’s Spirit is eternal but man has a body of flesh and a spirit, which like God is eternal. What God is proclaiming here is that, because man is made of flesh and bone, his body cannot live forever and therefore must have a limited lifetime. While men previous to this time have lived for hundreds of years, God is now going to limit the life of man’s body to no more than 120 years in the future. We can only speculate why God has suddenly chosen to greatly restrict man’s life expectancy from what we have previously witnessed, but it seems most likely it is due to our inclination towards sin. Perhaps God feels that if our life is shorter we will value it and our relationship with our Creator more.

Verses 4: *“The Nephilim were on earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.”* The Hebrew word “Nephilim” is transliterated rather than translated because its true meaning is unclear. “Nephilim” is derived from the Hebrew verb which means “to fall, fall down or fall away.” The most common translation is “giant” but the word can also mean “bully or tyrant,” and even “heroes, or fierce warriors.” Why are these “Nephilim” referred to as “giants, mighty and renown” which would be consistent with their being “bullies, tyrants, or fierce warriors”? Remember the “sons of God” from verse-2? The Nephilim are the offspring of the “sons of God” who “came in to the daughters of men” and “bore children to them.” If the “sons of God” are “fallen angels” then it would make sense that the name of their offspring, the “Nephilim,” would be based on the verb “to fall.” It is not completely clear in the last sentence of the verse if “those” who are “mighty men” and “men of renown” is a reference to the “Nephilim” or the “sons of God.” A clue may be found in the meaning of the Hebrew word translated as “old” used in reference to them. This particular Hebrew word actually means “hidden or concealed” as in to the vanishing point. It infers more than old but something from “time immemorial, antiquity, from most ancient of times.” This is not usually used in reference to men but things or beings that are eternal, that have existed since the beginning of time. Therefore there is strong evidence that the Nephilim were giant, powerful and perhaps violent men who were the offspring of fallen angels having sexual relations with human women. Some speculate

that the giant “Goliath” was of the Nephilim. You might be thinking that all these creatures will die in the flood and therefore could not exist in the time when king David will fight Goliath, but our verse speaks of the Nephilim as “in those days” and “also afterward.”

Verses 5: *“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”*

What began as a simple bad choice with Adam and Eve, and escalated into murder with their son, Cain, has now become widespread and a great evil. Man’s “thoughts” and “heart” are “continually” focused on doing evil. This probably means that man has become more and more selfish, focusing increasingly on himself with no regard to the suffering of others as he strives to satisfy his own desires. God no longer holds a significant place in the thoughts and heart of man, so in the absence of a relationship with God and the moral compass God alone provides, man has become completely lost in sin.

Verses 6: *“And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.”* We know that God doesn’t change and is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, but God does experience joy in our obedience and sorrow in our disobedience. Apparently, mankind has become so wicked and evil that God is so grieved that He now regrets having made man. But God is also both forgiving and a just judge. Wickedness must be punished and righteousness rewarded.

Verses 7 & 8: *“And the Lord said, ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.’ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.”* God has decided to do a “do over.” He will punish and destroy all that has become corrupt, including man and animals. It is unclear why God seeks to destroy animal life along with humans. Perhaps man’s wickedness and violence has infected the animal world as well and it is not only men who now prey upon one another. But even in the midst of this destruction, God will preserve the righteous and a righteous remnant to fulfill His ultimate plan for man. God always finds a way and provides a way. Regardless of how bad the world becomes or how dark things might seem to be in our own life, God has a way out and a plan for escaping evil and preserving what’s good. His light always shines, illuminating the path to salvation and provides us with hope.

Noah's Ark: (Why?)

God will ask Noah to build an ark to preserve and save Noah's family and a remnant of all flesh—all living things that breath on the earth. Noah, like the boat he will build, is an instrument through which God will preserve the “seed” and “promise” of His plan.

Verse-9: *“These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.”* The Hebrew word translated as “blameless” literally means “just, lawful, honest, right and righteous.” This does not mean that Noah was like Christ, being completely sinless, but that he was a righteous man “in his time” or as compared to his contemporaries. We are told that “Noah walked with God,” meaning he had a close relationship with God, living according to God's will through the guidance, strength and grace that flows from God.

Verse-10: *“And Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.”* The genealogy of Adam has already mentioned Noah's three sons (5:32). They are mentioned again here because Noah's righteousness will not only preserve his life but the life of his family. We are not told if Noah's sons are also righteous, the father's righteousness also seems to preserve the life of his sons, and as we will learn, even the families (wives) of his sons.

Verse-11: *“Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence.”* The earth has become lawless and filled with wickedness and injustice, and oppression, which has led to harm and violence and damage.

Verse-12: *“And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way.”* Here we have additional insight into what was speculated in verse 7. Not only man has become corrupted but “all flesh.” It is not clear if man has spread his corruption to all other flesh—all other animals that breath, or if they have become corrupt on their own accord. Remember that man was given dominion over all creatures. If man has failed to be a good and just ruler by becoming corrupt, then it makes sense that those he rules over would also become corrupt and lawless.

Verse-13: *“Then God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.’”* God informs Noah that He is going to destroy all flesh on earth because of the violence the living breathing creatures that live on the earth are causing.

We are presuming that it is the living, breathing creatures that have become violent that are the cause, but what is the root cause? What caused them to become violent, lawless, wicked and oppressive? We already know these things come when we become self-centered rather than God-centered. We know they seem to naturally occur when we separate ourselves from God. So perhaps the questions should be what separates us from God or who tempts us to focus and listen to self rather than to God? Satan? Those who have been deceived by Satan? The New Testament may help us shed some light on this. When the Apostle Peter talks about the final judgment and destruction of the world, he references the first, providing us with some insight. Peter states in 2 Peter 3:3-7: ***“Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation. For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.”*** Combine Peter’s words with those found in Revelation, where it is stated: ***“And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever”*** (Revelation 20:9-10). Temptation to defy God seems to clearly originate with Satan and those who follow him. While we are given freedom of choice by God, when we make the wrong choice and listen to Satan, we cause ourselves to become separated from God. Through that separation and in the absence of God’s guidance we become lost in our sin, resulting in lawlessness, violence and oppression. Only a return to God through genuine repentance and acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior can we find salvation and the path that leads to life eternal. God’s Word and His Presence through the Holy Spirit in our lives will provide us both guidance and strength to overcome the darkness and Satan’s deceptions. While we may be persecuted for our faith in this world, Christ’s victory is certain, and we will share in His victory.

Noah's Ark: (What?)

Verses 14 and 15 provide dimensions and some of the features of the ark's construction. The ratio of its length, width and height are the same ratios modern ship builders use today and are considered the best ratio for stability on water. The ark is very large at about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. This makes its interior volume about 1.5 million cubic feet. Unlike modern ships in which much space is used for propulsion and fuel, all of the space within the ark would have been available for the housing of animals and the storage of food.

Verse-14: *“Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.”* The Hebrew word translated as “ark” literally means a “box” or “chest.” We normally depict the “ark” in the form and shape of an ancient ship, but the word emphasizes the intended use as a “container.” The Hebrew word translated as “gopher wood” in many English Bibles is an unknown wood. The word “gopher” is a transliteration of the Hebrew word, which means it is the way we pronounce the Hebrew letters that make up the word in English. Some Bibles translate the wood as “cypress” because this was a common wood used in early ship building, but we actually have no idea what type of wood was used. The Hebrew word translated as “rooms” literally means “nests” or “compartments.” Because the ark will house animals and birds of a large variety of sizes, these will likely be everything from large stalls to small cubbies for birds to nest. The surface of the ark, and in this case probably the hull or outer structure is to be covered with “pitch.” The Hebrew word “pitch” is generally understood to refer to “bitumen” or “asphalt.” Essentially, it would resemble “tar” to us and was probably used as a waterproofing.

Verse-15: *“And this is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.”* The Hebrew “cubit” was about the length of the human forearm, making it a convenient measurement. Most set this measurement at about eighteen inches, but it could have been as much as twenty-one inches. Based on these values the ark would be approximately 450 feet long (length), 75 feet wide (breadth) and 45 feet tall (height). The ark would have been considered gigantic and was much larger than anything built until our modern times.

The following is a comparison of ship sizes beginning with Santa Maria used by Columbus. The ark would be close in size to a modern freight ship, but it is also compared here to the Titanic, which in the early 1900's was the largest passenger ship ever built.



(Santa Maria)



(Modern Freighter)



(Noah's Ark, based on 18" or 21" cubit)



(Titanic)

Verse-16: *“You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.”* The Hebrew word translated as “window” actually means “covering” or “roof.” But this covering or roof is to be finished “a cubit from the top,” which means a space of about 18” is to be left between the roof and the ark. This space acts as a “window” to let in light and fresh air, while the covering or roof prevents the rain from filling the ark. Likewise, a door or opening is to be left in the side of the ark to facilitate the entry and exit of its contents. This door will be shut and sealed after the ark is filled prior to the flood. The ark is also to have three levels, which are literally, the lowest, second and third. There will be three decks in the ark for the housing and storage of animals and food.

Noah's Ark: (Vessel of Salvation)

God will destroy everything that is corrupt and violent but He will save Noah, and through Noah and the ark that Noah will build out of obedience to God, a remnant of man and all breathing live will be saved. God saves because and through Noah's obedience.

Verse-17: *“And behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.”* God is making absolutely clear that the flood being sent comes from Him. The sin and violence of man may be the cause but judgment comes from God and God alone. The flood will destroy all that has breath on the surface of the earth and under heaven, including all animals, reptiles and birds. The Hebrew meaning of “perish” literally means to breathe out last breath, to breathe no more, to die. We should remember that only God can pass judgment but that God will pass judgment.

Verse-18: *“But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.”* The Hebrew understanding of the word “covenant” here is a “determination, stipulation or agreement” which God makes for man. The Hebrew understanding of “covenant” between men requires each to make a pledge to each other with the understanding that if it is broken the one who breaks it will suffer dire consequences. But it is different when offered by God. God is infinite and we are finite, therefore there is nothing God needs from us and nothing we can do for God. God’s covenants tend to be one-sided in that He promises to do something for us that we can never earn or repay to Him. In this case, while God has declared that He is about to destroy all flesh upon the earth, He is promising to spare Noah, his wife, his sons and his sons’ wives by allowing them to enter the ark which will keep them alive through all the destruction. Again, God’s grace extended beyond Noah and will include his whole family and the families of his sons.

Verse-19: *“And every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.”* Perhaps Noah had been wondering why God was having him make such a gigantic ship. Now, for the first time, God lets Noah know that not only his family will be saved but also two of every living creature on the earth, a male and a female. Noah must now be wondering if the ship is big enough and how he is going to round up so many animals.

Verse-20: *“Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every kind shall come to you to keep them alive.”* God further clarifies that all animals includes the birds mammals and reptiles—every living creature that breathes on the earth and under heaven. But of even

greater importance, Noah is advised that they will come to him. Noah will not have to gather them. God is taking care of this Himself. “Every kind shall come to” Noah so that he can keep them alive. It is through Noah and the ark that God has instructed Noah to build that they will be saved. Noah’s obedience to God will save them.

Verse-21: *“And as for you, take for yourself some of all food which is edible, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them.”* While God will “gather” the animals, it will be Noah’s responsibility to “gather” the food that his family and the animals on the ark will eat. Some Bibles translate this as “fodder” but essentially it is food suitable for consumption by man and beasts. It is likely all forms of fruit, vegetables, grains, herbs, nuts and perhaps grasses. He is to collect enough to keep everything alive during the duration of the flood. Scripture does not inform us how much he was to gather or that he was advised how long it would need to last. We must assume that God somehow has revealed this to him, or will make what he gathers last as long as needed. There is no indication or suggestion that any “meat” is stored. There is no indication that any living thing in the ark will live at the sacrifice of another, but that all will be kept alive by God through Noah.

Verse-22: *“Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.”* Noah did what God commanded. He did no more or less than what God instructed. Noah trusted God to know what was right and what was necessary. Noah was absolutely faithful and trusting in God’s Word. It is this unfailing obedience that allows God to use Noah as such a perfect instrument, doing what we would consider impossible. His obedience flows from his faith and trust in God, and his faith will save him, his family, and a remnant of everything that lives and breathes.

Chapter 7: The Flood

Noah continues to be faithful and obedient to God, having built the ark, filled it with food, and receiving the animals sent by God, he and his family enter it and the flood begins. For forty days and nights water pours forth from the deep and falls from the sky until the entire world is flooded to a depth that covers even the mountain peaks. All life that breathes on the face of the earth and under heaven is extinguished according to God’s judgment except that which He has preserved safe in the ark, God’s seed for a new world to begin again. Evil is destroyed and only the righteous remain.

Verse-1: *“Then the Lord said to Noah, ‘Enter the ark, you and all your household; for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.’* The Hebrew word translated “household” derives from the verb “to build” and is usually translated as house, dwelling place or receptacle. As in this case it can also refer to a family in the sense that a family dwells in the same house or place. God is telling Noah to enter the ark and to take with him everyone who dwells in his house—his family. Clearly, Noah “alone” is seen as righteous by God, but yet his whole household will also be allowed to enter the ark and be saved. Noah is not the only person seen by God as righteous but he is the only one in this “time.” The Hebrew meaning of “time” in this case is in reference to Noah’s “generation” or his “contemporaries” or those who are alive during the time of his life.

Verse 2 & 3: *“You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female; also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth.”* Most are aware that the animals that entered the ark were in pairs, one male and one female, but here we are told that some animals and all birds will enter “by sevens,” which means seven pair of each. The distinction in the case of animals of what will enter as one pair or seven pairs depends on if they are classified as “clean” or “unclean.” There has been no reference prior to this point in Scripture to define what is considered clean and unclean except perhaps a distinction between the righteous and the unrighteous. Formal classifications will be provided by God through Moses, and recorded much later in Leviticus, chapter 11. We can only assume Noah knows what is considered clean or unclean because God has told him, or perhaps he will learn what is clean when God sends seven pair of some animals and only one pair of others to the ark. God will designate to Moses that only “clean” animals, birds and fish will be allowed to be eaten. In the beginning God had created all life to live off plants rather than consuming the flesh of one another. There is no indication that this has changed among the righteous who still live according to God’s will. There is also no indication that these animals are intended to be food aboard the ark. They are being placed on the ark to keep their “offspring” (seed) alive. But it should be mentioned that some scholars disagree and believe that the “clean” animals placed on the ark were to provide food for Noah and

his family. There is nothing specifically written to either suggest this is the case or to prohibit it from being true. Actually, we cannot know for certain.

Verse-4: *“For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made.”* Seven is a number symbolic for completeness. We do not know for certain how much time transpired between God’s command to Noah to build the ark because He is going to destroy all life that breathes on the earth, and God’s command to enter the ark and take with all the animals and birds in the quantities He has designated. But upon God’s instruction to enter the ark He advises Noah that only seven days remain before the rains begin to fall, which will last for forty days and forty nights. The number forty is also symbolic for a complete period of time and many events in the Bible take forty days, or forty years to occur. Some scholars speculate that the actual length of time could have been more than forty. While the actual length of time isn’t necessarily important, there is no reason to doubt that the periods of time listed are accurate. This is supported by how important specific time periods seem to be to God. We have already been given very specific time periods for when children were born and regarding the length of important people’s lives.

Verse-5: *“And Noah did according to all that the Lord had commanded him.”* This is the second time we are told that Noah was obedient to God and did all that He commanded. In Genesis 6:22, we were told this after Noah was obedient in building the ark as God instructed. Now he has been obedient in gathering food and receiving the animals that God has sent to find safety in the ark.

Verse-6: *“Now Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of water came upon the earth.”* Based on the genealogy provided in chapter 5, the flood comes 1,661 years after God created Adam and Eve. Noah’s three sons, born to him when he was around 500 years old, are all at least 100 years old and have wives of their own.

Verse-7: *“Then Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him entered the ark because of the water of the flood.”* Note the order given for entering the ark. Noah, the righteous one through which all will be saved, enters first, followed by his sons, his wife and his sons’ wives. The seed is passed down through the males, so Noah goes first immediately followed by his sons. The women are last to board. This may

strike us as lacking in chivalry, but in the beginning, the man is to lead the family by his example.

Verses 8 & 9: *“Of clean animals and animals that are not clean and birds and everything that creeps on the ground, there went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded.”* Again the order may be important in that “clean” animals are listed first followed by the “unclean” animals, birds and then creeping things. They enter as families, two by two, male and female, and then go to Noah. God has commanded the animals to go to Noah in order to be saved.

Verse-10: *“And it came about after the seven days, that the water of the flood came upon the earth.”* What God says will happen, happens. God warns Noah that in seven days the flood will come (7:4), and sure enough, on the seventh day it begins.

Verse-11: *“In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened.”* God provides a very specific date for when the flood begins. The reason the date is so specific may be to emphasize that it is a historical fact, but the date may be important for other reasons for which we are unaware. All of these date references do allow us to map the events on a timeline. Also note that water sources on the earth are opened “on the same day” to emphasize they start at the same time as directed by God and are not a natural occurrence. And finally, note that there are two water sources, “fountains of the great deep” and “floodgates of the sky.” The “floodgates of the sky” seems most likely rainfall. Some speculate that the “fountains of the great deep” may be the many very deep oceanic trenches found in the world’s oceans. The source could also simply be springs of water coming from subterranean sources, or perhaps both. What is certain is that a massive amount of water is being released from an unknown source. While we may not know where this water comes from, let us not forget that in the creation story, all land was once covered by water.

Verse-12: *“And the rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.”* Here we are given both a limited time in which the flood is created, and an emphasis on the continuous nature of the flood. Once the flood began it continued “day” and “night” until the full flood level was reached. There was no rest or escape from the flood.

Limited to only forty days and nights of rain, the primary source of the floodwater must have been subterranean because rain alone could not have created such a flood in such a short time. Even at a four inch per hour rainfall rate over the entire surface of the world, twenty-four hours a day for forty days, the rise in water would only be 320 feet. This is not nearly enough to cover all the surface of the earth including the mountains.

Verses 13 through 15: These verses again repeat and clarify by name all the people and types of living, breathing creatures that entered the ark. These verses may seem to be redundant but it is often typical in the Old Testament to see things double stated. Perhaps in a way that acts as a fulfillment of the “two witness” rule to affirm it is the truth.

Verse-16: *“And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the Lord closed it behind him.”* Again, everything is referenced in association with Noah, i.e., entered as God had commanded “him” and the Lord closed the door behind “him.” It is through Noah’s righteousness alone that all are saved. Also note that the Lord, Himself, closes and seals the ark after all are on board.

Verse-17: *“Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days; and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth.”* The Hebrew word for “lifted up” literally means “to raise up” or “to prevail.” God is literally separating those who will be saved from those who are doomed to destruction by “lifting them up.” This is the same as it will be on the “last day” which God will “lift up” all who are to be saved. What remains on the earth will be destroyed.

Verse-18: *“And the water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark floated on the surface of the water.”* We can see some imagery of baptism in this in that going down into the water we die to sin, and then being lifted up above the water we are born anew in God. The water will wash all that is sinful away and preserve above it all that is righteous. Righteousness will “prevail” over the sinful world.

Verses 19 & 20: *“And the water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered. The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered.”* Here we are told that not only did the water become deep enough to cover every mountain under heaven, or essentially every mountain on the face of the earth, but it covered them to a depth of 15

cubits which is about 23 feet. Thus, the surface of the water was 23 feet above the tip of the highest mountains on earth.

Verses 21 & 22: *“And all flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died.”* Everything that lives on the surface of the earth that breathes air and has nostrils for breathing air dies. Regarding the swarming things, this is probably a reference to birds and animals that swarm rather than to insects. Insects are not specifically addressed anywhere, but insects, although they breathe air, do not have nostrils or lungs as do animals and birds.

Verse-23: *“Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark.”* We continue to be reminded that it is through Noah that all are saved. Those who are in the ark with him will live while everyone else will die. This can be seen as a foreshadowing of Christ and His Church. The Head of the Church is Christ, and the Church is symbolically considered a “ship.” Even nautical terms are used in reference to church buildings, for example, a church sanctuary where the people sit is called the “nave.” At the end of time, like in the beginning, God will save His righteous children through the ship of the Church through Christ.

Verse-24: *“And the water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.”* The flood will last for 150 days, which is five months. This time period will be more clearly stated in chapter 8, where we will learn that the time period is from when the rain began to fall until the ark comes to rest on the mountains of Ararat. Even air breathing reptilians which spend much of their time in the water could not survive so long in the open oceans.

Science and the Great Flood:

There has always been evidence all over the world that would point to some form of catastrophic flood event. This evidence has consisted of erosion patterns, huge boulders being found great distances from their geological sources indicating they had been moved by massive water flows, and the presence of saltwater fossils at high elevations. Many

scientists explain these through natural events including the lowering and rising of land masses which have placed them below and above the oceans at different times in history. Some of the features are also explained as the result of previous ice ages when massive amounts of ice changed sea levels and scarred the surface of the earth. Many believers in the flood and Noah's ark have long searched for definitive evidence that it actually occurred. Perhaps the best evidence found so far is what marine archaeologists have found in the depths of the Black Sea. Using robot underwater vehicles more than 300 feet below the surface they began to map a rolling landscape, fed by meandering streams and marked with wattle and daub houses. It is believed that the Black Sea was once a freshwater lake, well below sea level. About 7,000 years ago, according to geological evidence, the rising Mediterranean sea flooded inland and inundated the area of the now Black Sea. Sea shells on the beaches of the modern Black Sea are of marine origin, but deep below the surface there are layers of shells of freshwater life indicating a shoreline of the ancient freshwater lake. Along with this ancient shoreline explorers have the foundations of ancient houses, highly polished stone tools and fragments of ceramics. All of this indicates that people once lived at what is now the bottom of the Black Sea. There are many legends regarding a great flood beside the biblical account of Noah. Older than Genesis is the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh, an account of a god building a boat to save a family and animals from a great flood. Ancient Greeks and Romans grew up with the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha, who saved their children and a collection of animals by boarding a vessel shaped like a giant box. Irish legends talk about Queen Cesair and her court, who sailed for seven years to avoid drowning when the oceans overwhelmed Ireland. European explorers in the Americas were startled by Indian legends that sounded similar to the story of Noah. Even though the flood is embedded in the legends of many different peoples and seen in circumstantial evidence around the world, there is no definitive proof of a great flood that covered the entire world. Like so many other things we are told in the Scriptures, it comes down to what we believe. Do we only believe what we can prove or trust in God's account recorded in the Bible?

Chapter 8: The Flood Subsides

While it may have taken only forty days and nights for the flood to cover the world it will take a much longer time for the flood waters to subside. Noah and all those that God has

preserved in the ark will not be able to depart from the ark for one year and ten days. But based on the biblical account, even though the land appeared to be dry long before Noah exited the ark, he does not do so until God instructs him to. Noah continues to be obedient and follow God's every command. Would we under the same circumstances?

Verse-1: *“But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided.”* We should take note and find assurance in that “God remembered” Noah and the animals on the ark. God never forgets the faithful, and even though we may go through times of darkness and feel inundated by the things of this world, God remembers us and continues to care for us. The Hebrew word translated as “wind” refers to the “wind of the mouth” or the “breath that comes from the mouth.” The Hebrew word translated as “pass” in the context of “pass over” can also mean “pass away, pass on, disappear or remove.” It would seem just as God spoke everything into existence in the creation of the world, He will now breathe the flood away.

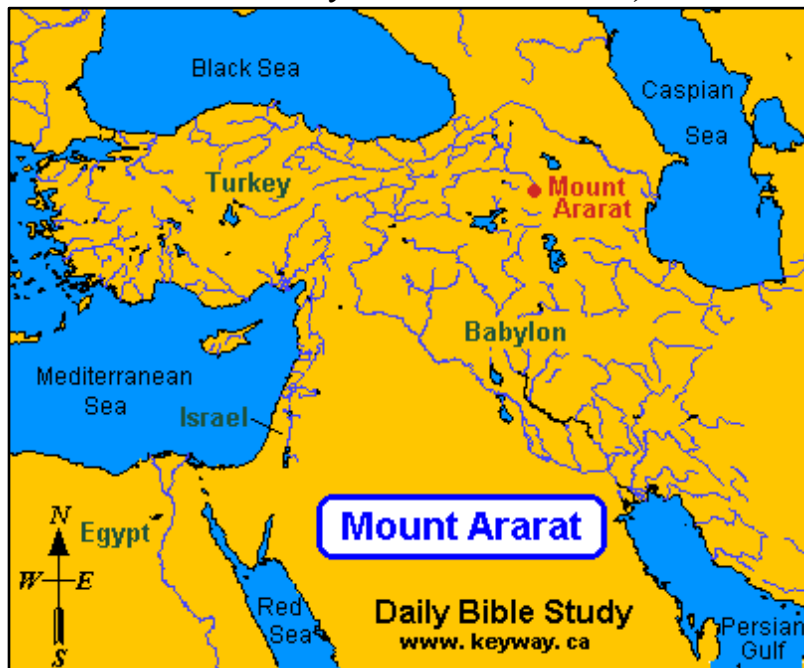
In Revelation 12:15-16, it is written: *“And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.”* Perhaps when it was time for the waters to subside, God commands the earth to open its mouth and receive back the waters which had burst forth as *“fountains of the great deep”* (7:11).

Verse 2& 3: *“Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained; and the water receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of one hundred and fifty days the water decreased.”* God had told Noah that the rains would fall for forty days and forty nights. Thus at the end of this period of time we can assume the “rain from the sky was restrained” and the “fountains of the deep” have closed. As advised in 7:24, the waters prevail on the earth until after one hundred and fifty days they decreased.

Verse-4: *“And in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat.”* Noah was commanded to enter the ark and the rains began on the six hundredth year, second month and seventeenth day of Noah’s life. On the seventh month, on the seventeenth day the ark comes to rest on the mountains of Ararat. This is a period of exactly five months or approximately 150 days. The map below indicates the location of Mount Ararat in what is today extreme eastern Turkey. There are many mountains in the region and together they are called the Ararat Mountains, getting their name from their most prominent and most holy, Mount Ararat which is three miles high. Nearest to Ararat is Little Ararat which is not as high. Below are photos of Mount Ararat alone (left) and with Mount Little Ararat (right).



Verse-5: *“And the water decreased steadily until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month the tops of the mountains became visible.”* We are told that by the first day of the tenth month, which would be about two and a half months after the ark rested on mountains of Ararat, that other mountain peaks became visible.



Mount Ararat is very tall with its peak today measured at 16, 854 feet above sea level. The mountain called Little Ararat is closest to Ararat and its height is 12,877 feet. There are numerous mountains in the Ararat Mountains region. All of these are shorter than Ararat and most average from 10,000 to 12,000 feet high. If the ark settled on the tallest mountain, Ararat, then other mountain peaks would appear as the waters continued to subside. If the ark rested on one of the other mountains in the area, Ararat and possible other mountain peaks would have already been visible at the time it came to rest. This is strong evidence that the ark may have actually come to rest on the namesake, Mt. Ararat.

Verses 6 through 12: In these verses we are told of a series of tests that Noah conducts to determine the extent in which the waters have receded. First, forty days after the mountains appear he opens a window in the ark and releases a raven. We are told that the raven flies here and there until the waters have dried up. The significance and meaning of the raven is a bit of a mystery. The bird is known for its intelligence and long life. Perhaps it is being used as a scout to determine the extent the waters have receded. We are also told that Noah releases a dove. It is not clear if it is released at the same time as the raven or later, but we are told that the dove returns not finding any place to land. Noah waits seven days and then releases the dove again, but this time it returns with an olive branch indicating that plants are growing on the surface of the earth again. Again, after seven additional days, Noah releases the dove but it does not return. The dove is considered a “clean” bird and therefore there would be seven pair onboard the ark. Why would the dove not return to the ark and to its mate? We are not told that the raven ever returns. Is the significance of the raven that the cycle of life and death is ready to continue? Did the dove fall victim to the raven, which eats both plants and other birds? Or does this simply mean that the dove finding food and a place to nest does not return?

Verse-13: *“Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the ground was dried up.”* The dove that was released and did not return was released about nine months after the flood began. Noah uncovers the ark and looks outside on the first day of the first month of his six hundred and first year, or about ten days later. Would this be Noah’s 601st birthday? Noah must have had incredible faith and patience. It is amazing

that he has not “looked” before to see what is happening outside the ark. We have been told of when the mountain tops appeared and that Noah has released birds from a window, but Noah has not looked to see if the land is dry? Evidently, the cue from the birds has caused Noah to open the roof or remove the roof of the ark allowing him to gaze out and perhaps down at the earth below it. He observes that the surface of the ground or earth is now dry.

Verse-14: *“And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month the earth was dry.”* This verse seems to declare that one month and twenty-seven days later that the Lord is declaring that the earth is now officially dry.

Verses 15 through 19: In these verses God commands Noah to leave the ark along with his family and all the animals and birds that have been with him. They are to go forth and breed and multiply and be fruitful on the earth. This seems to indicate that nothing was allowed to breed while on the ark. Given that the animals lived on the ark a year and many animals can breed more than once a year, the suspension of breeding may have been due to space limitations. Noah continues to do everything according to God’s commands. Even though he could see that the land had become dry he did not leave the ark until God told him it was time to do so, or perhaps safe to do so. Everything that leaves the ark leaves in “families.” As pairs each came on board and now male and female they leave together to begin the process of reestablishing their species. They are the seed of a renewed creation. God will evidently bless them all with offspring, telling them to “breed abundantly.” Like in our baptism, God has washed away all sin.

Verse-20: *“Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.”* Immediately upon departing the ark Noah gives thanks to God by building an altar and making an offering. The offering will come only from those animals and birds that God has declared “clean” which means pure. Is this why God gathered seven pairs of clean animals and birds onto the ark and only one pair of everything else? God will not sacrifice the future of any animal or bird, but has provided ahead of time the means for man to give thanks for all that God has provided him. The Hebrew word translated as “altar” is literally “a place of sacrifice” and was most often built from stones. The Hebrew word translated as “burnt offerings” literally refers to “a sacrifice which goes up

in smoke” or is “completely burned.” We cannot literally give things to God who is Spirit, but we can sacrifice to Him that which we value. In this case, animals and birds God has declared clean and pure are burned and the smoke rises up to God.

Verse-21: *“And the Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, ‘I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.’”* We are told that the Lord “smelled the soothing aroma.” This means that God “breathed in” or received the sacrificial gift that Noah offered in thanksgiving. We then have revealed to us three things that God said to Himself. First, God declares that He *“will never again curse the ground on account of man.”* This may mean that God will do no additional harm to the earth because of man’s sins, or it may mean that the curse of the ground had been lifted, allowing the earth to yield its fruit naturally with or without the efforts of man’s cultivation. The second is an acknowledgement that *“man’s heart is evil from his youth,”* meaning that God realizes that man will have a natural inclination towards self-centeredness and sinful behavior. And third, God states that He *“will never again destroy every living thing”* as He has done in the flood. Does this mean He will never again destroy every living thing, or that He will never again destroy every living thing using a flood. We know through later Scriptures that someday the Lord will destroy the earth by fire. Perhaps this means that in the future God will not destroy all that lives while preserving a remnant, but will instead preserve all that has been made righteous through Him and only destroy that which is evil and has rejected Him.

Verse-22: *“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”* Tucked away in this promise is a stipulation that is easy to miss. Day, night, and the seasons will continue “while the earth remains.” The earth was not intended by God to be eternal. Its final destruction is described in poetic imagery in Psalm 102:26, which is quoted in Hebrews 1:11, 12. The most graphic account of the end of the world, indeed of the entire physical universe, is found in 2 Peter 3:10.

Chapter 9: The Covenant of the Rainbow

In this chapter God will reveal some new rules to go into place following the flood, and He will establish a new covenant and promise to all who live upon the earth.

Verse-1: *“And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.’”* After the original creation, God blessed man and instructed him to “multiply and fill the earth.” Creation has now been washed clean and mankind has been given a second chance. God is consistent in His love and desire for man, therefore He again blesses and instructs we bear fruit, multiply and fill the earth.

Verse-2: *“And the fear of you and the terror of you shall be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given.”* The Hebrew word translated as “fear” is only used 12 times in the entire Old Testament, and in this case literally means “a fearful thing” or “dread.” In the original creation account, animals had no fear of man and every living thing lived off plant life rather than one another. The sin of man has caused all life on earth to be destroyed. Now, all living creatures shall live in fear of man, but they continue to be “given” to man.

Verse-3: *“Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.”* In this verse God permits man to eat all living creatures. As God in the beginning gave plants to man to eat, He now adds all other life as food for man. This may seem in contradiction with Deuteronomy 14:3-21 where God instructs His chosen people to eat only animals He has declared “clean” and not to eat animals He has declared as “unclean.” This law only applied to the Jewish people which God set apart as chosen and distinct from other nations.

Verse-4: *“Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.”* God imposes only one restriction regarding eating animals; we are not to consume the blood. God implies that the life of the animal is in its blood. The Hebrew word translated as “life” can refer both to the soul or that which is physically alive. The blood, which comes from the same Hebrew root as man, dirt and the color red, represents that which makes us alive. We are allowed to eat the dead carcass of an animal, bird or fish, but the blood must have been first removed, or perhaps, the life must have first been removed. Do not feed off the living but only the dead could even be the meaning here.

Verse-5: *“And surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man’s brother I will require the life of man.”* God gives all life and God will require it be returned to Him. The Hebrew word translated here as “require” can be translated many ways based on context. The meanings can be: “to inquire about, care about, demand, seek or call to account.” When we combine the various nuances of the word’s meaning we get the sense that because God cares about us, He will seek, call and demand that we give an account for our lives. In other words, God will give us a life to live and when our physical life ends God will demand we account for the way we lived. The Hebrew word translated as “brother” is not limited to a blood relation but all human beings, implying that we are all brothers.

Verse-6: *“Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man.”* The Hebrew word translated as “sheds” literally means to slaughter or murder rather than accidental death. What is being said is that whoever deliberately kills a human being shall be killed by a human being. Because man was created in the image of God, a man shall not be killed, and if a man is killed, only a man may take the life of the murderer.

Verse-7: *“And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.”* The Hebrew word translated as “populate” actually means “swarm.” Mankind is to be fruitful, and multiply to such an extent that we swarm on the earth in abundance.

Verses 8, 9 & 10: *“Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, ‘Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth.’* Note that God now addresses both Noah and his sons. The message is for all of them and all of their descendants. The message applies to everything that lives that came out of the ark and to all of their offspring. Again, the Hebrew word translated as “descendants” literally means “seed.” Thus, those who come off the ark are seed and will produce seed in their image that will continue to produce seed and perpetuate their life.

Verse-11: *“And I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy*

the earth.” The Hebrew word translated as “cut off” comes from the verb “to cut” and can mean everything from killed to exiled. In the Hebrew there is an interesting play on words here. Ancient “covenants” were generally “cut.” One or more animals were cut in half and the participants in the covenant or agreement would stand between the two halves and pledge to keep their covenant or to be cut in half like the animals. God is “cutting a covenant” with all flesh, promising never “to cut” off all life on earth through a global flood again. Note that God is promising only never to destroy the earth by flood again. He has not promised not to destroy the earth by some other means if He should decide to do so in the future.

Verses 12 & 13: *“And God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.’”* The Hebrew word translated as “sign” literally refers to a “mark, marker, symbol, memorial or proof.” The Hebrew word translated as “bow” is literally a bow for shooting arrows, but the word also implied the shape of an arch such as in a rainbow, and therefore the word was also used for the rainbow. The fact that this bow is set in the clouds clearly indicates its meaning is in reference to a rainbow rather than an instrument for hunting. The rainbow shall be the marker, memorial or proof of God’s covenant not to destroy the world by flood again. When we see it we are to be reminded of God’s covenant and be reassured. The Hebrew word translated as “successive” means that which is “hidden” or “concealed to vanishing point” and infers the understanding of perpetual, everlasting or forever. The Hebrew word translated as “generations” literally means the “period of a man’s life” or the “cycle of a lifetime.” The sign of the rainbow shall not only be for Noah’s generation but for all generations that follow until the end of time or the end of the earth.

Verses 14 & 15: *“And it shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh.”* Remember, the Hebrew word translated as “remember” means “to pierce, to impress or to cause to recollect.” Whenever rainclouds form the rainbow will accompany them and God will be reminded of His covenant not to

destroy all that lives through a flood. This does not mean that people will not die due to floods, but that God will never again destroy all life through a flood.

Verse-16: *“When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”* God here not only reiterates His promise, but further states that when the rainbow appears that He will look upon it and be reminded. God will never avert His eyes or turn away from His promise. His promise and faithfulness to keep it shall be everlasting.

Verse-17: *“And God said to Noah, ‘This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.’”* God closes His words establishing the covenant of the rainbow, repeating that it is between Him and all flesh on the earth.

After the Flood: Curse and Blessing

The remainder of chapter 9 focuses on the relationship between Noah and his three sons, and how their respect or lack of respect for their father results in blessing or curse upon their descendants.

Verse-18: *“Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan.”* The fact that Canaan is listed as the son of Ham does not mean that Canaan was born on the ark. Canaan’s name is stated here likely because it will be important in the verses that follow for identification purposes.

Verse-19: *“These three were the sons of Noah; and from these the whole earth was populated.”* The Hebrew word translated here as “populated” literally means “scattered.” God will “scatter” human seed all over the world using Noah’s three sons. Evidentially, Noah and his wife are now too old to bear children or simply will have no more children because we are told the world will be repopulated only by his three sons. Remember that Noah is only the tenth generation of human beings that are named starting with Adam and Eve. God began all human life with Adam and Eve. He will begin human life again on the earth with Noah’s three sons and their wives.

Verses 20 & 21: *“Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard. And he drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.”* The

Hebrew word translated as “farming” literally means “to be a man of the soil” or a “farmer” so Noah has decided to begin farming. More specifically, he plants a vineyard for the growing of grapes which can be eaten or turned into wine. We are told that Noah becomes drunk on wine and uncovers himself, lays naked inside the privacy of his tent. Although Noah has been faithful to God and never failed to be obedient to God’s command, this behavior could be seen by our standards as an example of ungodliness. Perhaps it should remind us that even the faithful are vulnerable to acts of poor judgment.

Verse-22: *“And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.”* The Hebrew word translated as “saw” can mean not only “to see” but also “to look” or “to inspect” or “to regard.” The Hebrew word translated as “nakedness” refers to “nudity” and infers a sense of “shame” or “disgrace.” The Hebrew word translated as “told” means “to bring forward” or “to reveal” or “to expose what would otherwise be unknown.” The Hebrew expresses a sense that Ham chose not to avert his eyes from seeing his father’s nakedness, and then “disgraced” his father by “revealing” the nakedness of his father hidden within his tent to his brothers outside. Essentially, Ham chose to “expose” rather than “conceal” his father’s shame.

Verse-23: *“But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father’s nakedness.”* The Hebrew word translated as “covered” literally means “to conceal” or “to keep secret” and can even be used as “to forgive.” Shem and Japheth make a different choice than Ham. They chose “to cover” their father’s nakedness rather than “to look.” They act “to conceal” and in doing so demonstrate “forgiveness” for their father’s indiscretion. They work to promote wholeness and healing rather than separation and disgrace. Their actions are a demonstration of “respect” while Ham’s act of exposing his father shows “disrespect.”

Verse-24: *“When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him.”* We do not know how Noah knew what his son had done, but we do know that the truth always eventually becomes known. The question is do we use the truth righteously or unrighteously? Shem and Japheth demonstrated righteousness in choosing “to cover” and “forgive” their father’s indiscretion which did not serve God to be made public. But Ham willingly “exposed” his father’s nakedness, demonstrating

unrighteousness by disrespecting his father. There is a lesson in this for all of us. We should never seek to expose the sin in others but promote wholeness and forgiveness.

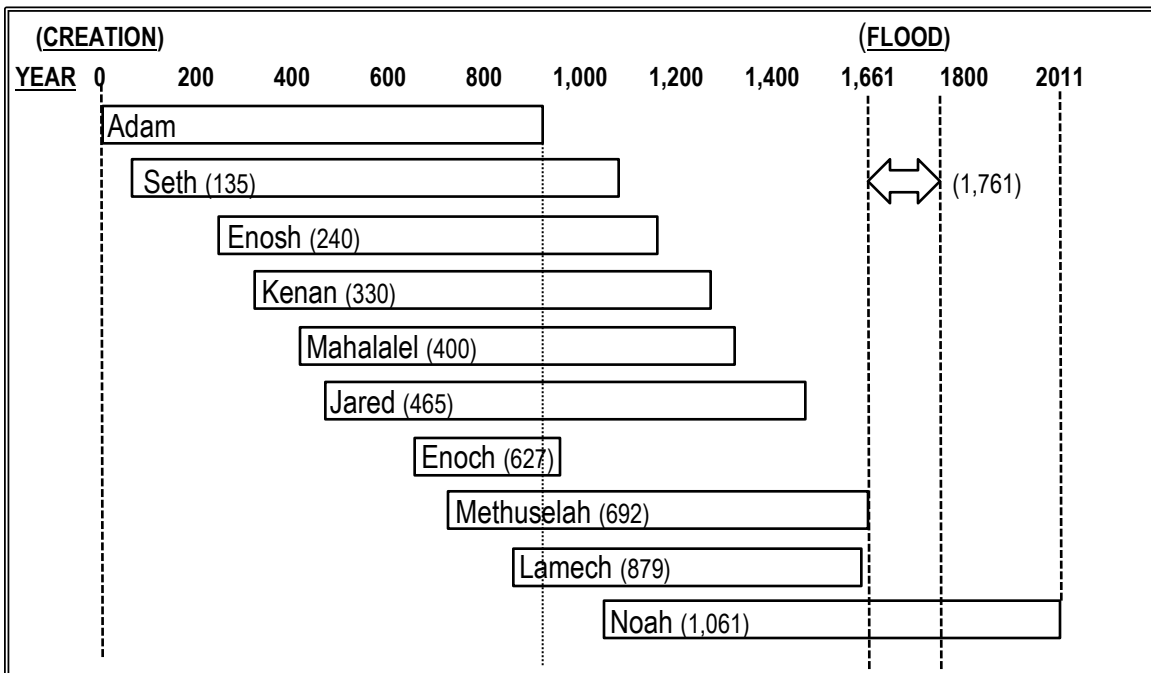
Verses 25, 26 & 27: *“So he said, ‘Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers.’ He also said, ‘Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant.’”* Based on the actions of his three sons, Noah now curses the descendants of Ham to be servants of the descendants of Shem and Japheth. The pecking order is established in that the Lord shall be the God of Shem. This indicates that Shem bears the seed and the blessing. Japheth shall also be blessed but shall “dwell in the tents of Shem,” which means his descendants will be brought under the same roof, under the same blessing from God through Shem. But the descendants of Ham, beginning with the descendants of his son Canaan, will be cursed to be servants of the others. One of Shem’s descendants will one day be Abraham the father of God’s chosen people. The descendants of Canaan will become the Canaanites, who will settle in the land of Canaan. Their land will be given to God’s chosen as the “promised land” and the Canaanites will be driven from the land by force and will forever be in conflict with Israel.

Verses 28 & 29: *“And Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood. So the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died.”* Unlike those descendants of Adam that were named and lived before Noah, we are not told that Noah had other sons and daughters. This supports that the earth was repopulated by his sons and their wives. Noah lives a long life after the flood, but like all men and as God has declared, he eventually must die.

Summary:

Part-4 reveals the earliest history of mankind’s journey and choices. Some chose to stay close to God and maintain their relationship with God, while others separated themselves from God and sought to live for themselves rather than as God directed. This is the age old choice we all have to make. We can live in a close relationship with God who calls us to be outward oriented, living for the benefit of others and depending on God’s provision, or being self-centered which leads to separation from God, corruption and growing violence. There is indication that in the beginning even God’s angels made

good and bad choices, either remaining faithful to God or engaging in sexual relationships with human women. The result was even greater corruption and violence on the earth. Ultimately, the corruption and violence spread to all living things, forcing God to destroy all life on earth through a world-wide flood. But God preserved a remnant, a seed through which all life could be saved. God chose a righteous man named Noah and through him saved his family and all living things. Noah's ark floated above the destruction that killed everything else and then came to rest on a world washed clean of sin and corruption. God even provided the sacrifice used to give thanks and honor Him for His salvation. The following chart continues the time line which began with Adam the first man. Noah's death comes 2,011 years after Adam was made, and 350 years after the flood.



(This Concludes Part-4)