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Genesis 8

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Genesis 8.

Topics.

- The heavens closed, the waters abated and the ark rested on Mount Ararat.
- Noah sent out a raven and a dove to see if the waters had subsided.
- God told Noah to go out from the ark, and Noah went out.
- God said, "I will never curse the ground for the intention of the heart is evil.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

The previous chapter: the focus of chapter four was upon Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives and seven pairs of every living creature entering the ark; upon the heavens opening; the waters prevailing 150 days and blotting out every living thing.

GENESIS 8:1-5

Heavens Closed, Waters Abated, the Ark rested on Mount Ararat.

- **Genesis 8:1-5:** But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. ²The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, ³and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, ⁴and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

Some say that the flood was not an actual historical event, but a mythical story used to explain creation in a simple and easy manner however the detail of the dates and days given as the flood receded and the frequent recurrence of the sacred numbers, seven and forty prove otherwise. Seven is a sacred number because of the holy character it is given being associated with the seventh and Sabbath Day. The LORD told Noah to load the animals into the ark seven days before the showers commence; at intervals of seven days the raven and the dove are sent out and the clean animals and birds enter the ark by seven pairs. The number forty (a product of four), is the number of the world or universe (i.e., north, south, east and west) these facts together show that the story is an actual historical event.

God remembered Noah the beasts and the livestock: (v1) on the surface this statement seems to imply that God had forgotten about Noah, but since God does not forget it is an expression spoken after the manner of men, and as it might have seemed to Noah, who having heard nothing of God after remaining in the ark for another one hundred and fifty days (five months) after the waters ceased and perhaps longer in the ark than he expected, might have begun to feel that God had forgotten him. It simply means that during Noah's time on the ark God was not intervening, but allowing the rain and the fountains of the earth to bring about what He had planned for them to accomplish. As soon as God takes steps to deliver Noah from the ark it is expressed as God remembered Noah and His covenant with him, and the promise that He had made to him, that he and his family and all the living creatures in the ark would be preserved alive during the flood spoken of in the following verse.

- God said to Noah, I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Make yourself an ark for I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven, but I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark with your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives and of every living thing of all flesh. (Gen. 6:13-19).

God made a wind blow over the earth: (v1) five months after the flood began, the ark grounded on the mountains of Ararat and a hot wind came over the earth to aid the retreat of the waters and promote evaporation of the water to dry out the land which would be needed after such an extreme downpour and flood. In the same way as the earth was not drowned in a day, likewise it was not dried in a day. Though God could have dried up the waters in an instant He chose to use the wind to bring about the evaporation of the water.

The fountains of the deep and windows of the heavens were closed: (v2) the relentless and stormy rain continued for almost six weeks (forty days) and rose fifteen cubits above the mountain (Gen. 7:20). There are varying ideas concerning the exact measurement of a cubit this is because it is not an exact measurement. A cubit is the Hebrew measure of length it arose (as did the English foot) from the simple estimating of distance in terms of the body. Farmers today measure the height of horses by hands. The word cubit comes from the Hebrew word ('ammah). Strong's Concordance states that a cubit is a unit of measure of the fore-arm (below the elbow to the hand) (approximately 12 inches (300mm) while a long cubit is the length of the fore-arm plus the length of the hand (approximately 18 to 20 inches (450 to 500 mm). Supposing a cubit is 300mm it means that the waters rose about 4½ metres (about the height of a two-story building) above the top of the mountains. This means that it is very unlikely that all of the original ground of the generations prior to the flood was exactly restored since much of the landscape would have been dramatically changed and some areas may have become a permanent water bed, while in other places new land may have risen. For this reason, it is a pointless exercise to seek for the exact spot of the Garden of Eden. The Euphrates and Tigris may substantially remain, but the Pishon and Gihon may have considerably changed and the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, lakes Van and Lake Urumiah may cover portions of the Adamic land.

GENESIS 8:6-12

Noah sent out a Raven and Dove to see if the Waters had Subsided.

- **Genesis 8:6-12:** At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made ⁷and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. ⁹But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. ¹⁰He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. ¹¹And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹²Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

The raven: following are the two most common thoughts concern the raven and the expression, to and fro amongst commentators:

1. Since it does not say that the raven returned to Noah, and the expression, "to and fro," can carry the idea of flying around or from place to place, and the raven is a bird that feeds on meat many commentators suppose that the raven found abundant food in the floating dead bodies on the surface of the waters and did not return to the ark, but flew to and fro from carcass to carcass, finding rest on them and eating as they pleased.

2. Others say, that this is unlikely, because the Scriptures say, "until the waters were dried up from the earth," (v7) which means that this to and from only lasted until the dry earth appeared, but ravens even today have not ceased from flying to and fro seeking meat which means the expression to and fro more likely applies to the raven returning to the ark and that this continual returning ceased as soon as the earth was dry.

The dove: it is very likely the raven returned with meat in its mouth and that Noah knowing the raven was a meat-eating bird and that there would be an abundance of swollen dead bodies floating on the waters chose to send out the dove. It returned the first time, without good news; but the second time she brought back an olive leaf plainly showing that fruit trees had begun to appear above the water. Noah waited seven days and again sent the dove out a second time. The expression in verse ten and eleven, "Noah waited another seven days, and again sent forth the dove out," intimates that Noah waited seven days after sending the raven out, before he sent the dove out (perhaps each Sabbath Day).

The olive leaf was a sign that all those in the ark would return safely to the land, it is from this world changing event that the olive branch became the symbol of peace, and the dove became a symbol of the Comforter and messenger of peace. After another seven other days the dove being sent out returns no more.

GENESIS 8:13-19

God told Noah to Go Out from the Ark, and Noah went Out.

- **Genesis 8:13-19:** In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. ¹⁴In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶"Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." ¹⁸So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. ¹⁹Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

God spoke unto Noah: (v15) whether in a dream; by a vision; by an articulate voice; by appearing in a human form or by an impulse on his mind we cannot know and it matters not since all we do need to know is that the LORD spoke so to him and that he heard him and understood him. Noah entered the ark in the 600th year of his life, on the 17th day of the 2nd month (Gen. 7:11-13). One year later he left the ark on the 27th day of the 2nd month of the 601st year (Gen. 8:14-16). Ten days after that would be the 27th day of the 2nd month, when they came out. That's 360 days (assuming a lunar calendar year of 360 days), plus ten days means that Noah was on the ark for approximately 370 days or just over a year.

Ponder for a moment the eager longing Noah and his family must have felt after spending more than a year on the ark and the overwhelming joy when the LORD said, "leave the ark." It is easy to imagine their excitement as they departed from the ark that had saved them from certain death to walk on solid ground again and begin a New World. This same excitement while again be experienced in the heart of every believer when their Lord and Saviour returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to gather the faithful to himself and establish a New World of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

GENESIS 8:20-22

I will Never Curse the Ground for the Intention of the Heart is Evil.

- **Genesis 8:20-22:** Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention (imagination in KJV) of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. ²²While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."

Noah built an altar to the LORD: (v20) here again the faith of Noah is manifested, the first thought of most upon entering a desolate world would be to build a house for themselves, but Noah begins his life in the New World by building an altar to God. The first thing he did in the New World was an act of worship.

The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma: (v21) this carries the idea of a smell of satisfaction. It is not so much that the sacrifice itself gave God pleasure, but that God was pleased with what Noah had done since it expressed his humble faith and devotedness to Him.

The LORD said in his heart: (v21) meaning he said and determined within Himself or within His will and then revealed this determination of His will to Noah.

I will never again curse the ground: (v21-22) the following verse shows that God cursed the ground upon the first entrance of sin: -

- God said to Adam, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life." (Gen. 3:17).

When God flooded the earth, it He added to this first curse, but now determines within Himself not to add to these two curses while the earth remains (as we know it today) there will always be seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night. This does not mean that there will not be partial floods; disasters; storms, or judgments on particular areas of land as those of Sodom and Gomorrah and as we have seen throughout history. The curse that came after sin and the curse that came upon the generations prior to the flood affected the entire earth; all mankind and every living creature globally. The LORD is saying that there will never again be such global destruction of the world and the creatures in it, at least not by water. In the book of Isaiah, the LORD states:

- I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth. (Isaiah 54:9)

The intention (imagination in KJV) of man's heart is evil from his youth: (v21) every child born is conceived in sin from the womb and therefore born under the curse the law which states, "the wages of sin is death," (Rom. 6:23). God curses the ground because the imagination of man's heart is evil, but now gives this as a reason why He will not again curse the ground. What was once the reason for destroying the earth is now the reason why God will not destroy it. Jesus when speaking to his disciples said:

- Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. (Matt. 15:19).

God considering that mankind (through Adam) has brought themselves into such a pitiful condition, that sinful aberrations and dysfunctions are now natural to the human race from birth and that their thoughts, mind and heart is tainted with sin and that it is from these that outward sins flow. Knows that if He was to curse and drown the world as often as mankind sins, He would be continually doing it. It is for this reason He chooses to show grace and mercy (at least until the final Day of Judgment). The verse carries the following idea: since the imagination of man is continually wicked from his very childhood, I have a just cause to destroy the earth, but will not do so. In the generations prior to the flood these imaginations had been unrestrained and therefore led to God's wrath.

- The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Gen. 6:5)

God understands human weakness so when He sees individuals, churches, governments and rulers of nations attempting to restrain sin in the world he chooses to show mercy rather than wrath. This could be likened to an earthly father who loves his teenage son, he understands that his son will at times do what is wrong, but if he sees that his son endeavours to do what is right he will discipline him in love and guide him. However, if the son is blatantly rebellious, corrupt and evil, he will give him over to administrators of the justice system to be judged accordingly. The story of the flood shines a light upon the following three things:

1. The power of God's judgment and punishment upon a world that had become totally devoid of God and wickedly evil.
2. The great faith and patient godliness of the Noah who was spared from it.
3. God's wrath against the wicked and His love for the faithful.

Noah by his obedience to the LORD'S command and his faith toward Him became heir of righteousness which is by faith. Those who live in this present age and have faith in God and trust in Him are fully aware that there is a future Day of Judgment to come, and with this knowledge take refuge in God's love, grace and salvation as Noah took refuge in the ark knowing that while the world is drowning and on a path to judgment they are not only never forgotten by God and live in His heart, but also know that He will show that He will remember them at the appointed time. The ark carried Noah from the storm and delivered him safety into the new world likewise the Lord Jesus Christ who is our ark will carry all who dwell in him by faith through the storms of this life and deliver them safely into the new and eternal world to come.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.