

**Cole Community Church Growth Groups  
Leaders Guide for Genesis 6:11 – 8:19  
Week of November 23, 2008**

**Introduction**

As we have seen in Genesis 6:8-9 Scripture states that Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord and that Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time and he walked with God.

**Read Genesis 6:11-22**

In the account that we are looking at today there is a great deal of detail of what Noah is to do in preparation for the flood that God plans to bring upon the earth. Details such as the dimensions to which the ark/boat is to be built, the material that was to be used to build the ark, the types and numbers of animals to be brought into the ark. Even the number of days on which a particular event took place is cited in detail. Note that Noah needed to bring into the ark two of each of the unclean animals plus seven of every kind of clean animals. Only two of each of the unclean animals would be needed as they would be released and reproduce. Noah would also need two of each of the clean animals for reproduction plus additional clean animals (a total of seven of each type of clean animal) for ceremonial sacrifice and for food. (Gen 8:20; 9:3)

**1. Why do you think God gave such specific instructions for Noah to follow?**

The instructions given here are precise and explicit. There is nothing vague or mythical about the instructions. For example, there are very exacting overall dimensions to which Noah is to build the ark (e.g., Cypress/gopher wood, 450 feet/300 cubits long, 75 feet/50 cubits wide, 45 feet/30 cubits high, a single door on the side of the ark for entry into the ark and exit, lower, middle and upper decks, rooms within the ark, a roof and a window, sealed with pitch inside and out. (Gen 6:14-16; 8:6)). The attention to detail testifies to the fact that God is a God of order. Though God can work in any manner He chooses, He often works in a planned and rational manner with us and with nature. The detail testifies to the fact that there was a physical ark that was used to save Noah, his family, and the animals. And the rest of scripture speaks of the flood and the ark as a real event (Heb 11:7).

**Read Genesis 7:1-24 – 8:1-19**

The whole flood experience occurred over more than a year's time. While we often refer to the 40 days and 40 nights of the flood there are many other actions and events that hold significance in the flood experience account.

**2. Note the number of days associated with the events of the flood and how they associate with similar numbers in scripture.**

7 days of waiting for the flood (7:4)  
    7 days of waiting for the flood (7:10)  
        40 days of flood (7:17a)  
            150 days of water triumphing (7:24)  
            150 days of water waning (8:3)  
                40 days of waiting (8:6)  
                    7 days of waiting (8:10)  
                        7 days of waiting (8:12)

The 7 day pattern here is the same 7 day pattern seen in the creation account in Genesis 1. The period of 40 days is also significant later in the Torah as in the waiting and watching in the “40 days” of spying out the promised land and the corresponding “40 years” of waiting in the wilderness (Num 14:33-35). In the Numbers passage the “40 years” are specifically said to correspond to the “40 days.”

(Adapted from J.W. Wendham Word Biblical Commentary [Waco: Word, 1987])

**3. How does scripture describe Noah’s relationship with God? What does the ark symbolize about our relationship with God today?**

Building the ark, entering the ark, and having the one and only door sealed up while outside the sky was blue. It could not have been easy for Noah as he went about his life’s journey obeying God’s instructions. There were no physical signs that a flood was about to occur or physical signs that God was going to use the flood to bring judgment on all of mankind except the eight family members of the Noah family. Scripture says that the people of that day were going about their lives “...eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away...” (Matt 24:38-39)

Can you imagine how the totality of people described as “ungodly people” would interact with Noah as he built this outsized boat when the sun was shining every day and there was no rain in sight, let alone a massive cataclysmic flood? Imagine how these ungodly people would belittle Noah as day-by-day he followed God’s explicit instructions.

This narrative indicates that Noah had a regular, ongoing dialog with God. It is the type of relationship that the Lord seeks to have with each of us today. Scripture notes that Noah did everything just as God commanded. (Gen 7:22).

The apostle Peter refers to the flood and he notes that, with the exception of Noah and his family, God did not spare any people or animals of the ancient world because of their unrighteousness. (2 Peter 2:5)

Note that the ark had a single door for entry into the ark. In Genesis 7:1 God told Noah that it was time for him and his whole family to go (come) into the ark. This is a clear implication that God is waiting in the ark for Noah and his family. God was with Noah in the ark. In Genesis 7:16 it is noted that it was the Lord who shut the door of

ark. This is just as Jesus extends an invitation for each of us to “come unto me.” He is our ark of salvation and he protects us.

The ark is a picture of safety. It is also to be a place of rest and comfort for Noah, his family and the animals. This water proof vessel is symbolic of the rescue, rest and safety brought to us by Jesus who will carry us through the floods and catastrophes of life.

#### **4. How does this Scripture describe the swiftness and completeness of God’s judgment of the civilization of Noah’s day? Should we expect God to act differently today?**

Chapter 7 gives an account of the ravages of the flood by stating:

- Every living thing that moved on earth perished... (v21)
- Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. (v22)
- Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out... (v23)
- Only Noah was left and those with him in the ark. (v23)

This narrative gives us insight into how God deals with ungodliness. God patiently waited 120 years (Genesis 6:3) for people to accept him and his righteousness as Noah declared the truths about God to the society of his day. When judgment came it came swiftly. Civilization of that day came to a sudden and swift end. Throughout Scripture there are warnings and examples of the suddenness of God’s judgment.

Genesis 8 opens with the note that “God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark...” There are parallels to God’s deliverance of Israel in the Exodus. Scripture tells us that God remembered his covenant (Ex 2:24) and sent a strong east wind to dry up the waters before his people (Ex 14:21) went through on dry ground (Ex 2:25). In the story of the flood God remembered those in the ark and sent a wind over the waters so that his people might come out on dry ground (Gen 8:13-14).

There are also parallels in the timing of the deliverance of Noah and of the deliverance of the people of Israel. In his book *The Beginnings*, Ray Steadman makes the case that the very day of the month that Jesus was resurrected from the dead is the day that the ark grounded and Noah and his family knew that they would emerge from the ark to a new earth. Following is text from *The Beginnings*.

What is particularly significant in this section (of Genesis 8) is the date on which the ark grounded on the hills of Ararat, which is given very precisely. It was the first sign to Noah and the inhabitants of the ark that a new world was about to appear from the water. Their first ground of confidence that the judgment was abating and the flood waters were receding was when they felt the ark ground itself upon the mountains of Ararat. The date, you may be amazed to learn, is the exact day of the year when, centuries later, Jesus rose from the dead.

In Exodus, Chapter 12, we are told that at the giving of the Passover God changed the seventh month to the first month. He made Passover the beginning of the year, though previously the beginning of the year had come in the fall. On the fourteenth day of the first month (which was formerly the seventh month) the Passover was to be eaten. We know from the Gospels that on the day the Passover was eaten our Lord died in Jerusalem. Three days from the fourteenth would bring us to the seventeenth, and on the seventeenth day of the first month Jesus rose from the dead. That would be the same as the seventh day of the seventh month in the old reckoning of this passage in Genesis. It is most significant that the ark grounded upon the mountains of Ararat on the same calendar day on which our Lord rose from the dead, thus signifying that life on the new earth for God’s people was to rest upon resurrection power. I do not think you could possibly have a clearer picture than this portrayal of the basis for our life on this present world. Now Noah is expected to act upon God’s activity (as outlined in Gen 8:6-12).

- 5. In Genesis 8: 6-12 the text features the release of a raven (an unclean animal) and a dove (a clean animal). What is represented by these animals, their release and how they behaved following their release?**

Scripture such as Romans 7:24-8:2 tell us what we already know from experience. That is as Christians, we have two natures that are in conflict and at war within us. There is our old nature (the raven), our human nature, who goes about satisfying its hunger on carrion...the foul and filthy things of this world with little regard for others. The raven is content to fly from place to place and not return to the ark, the symbol of salvation. The raven is worthless to Noah. The dove is released, but returns to the ark and it rests in the ark until a new world is ready for it. On its last return it brings an olive leaf in its bill as a symbol of life and peace. Just as with the birds, there are two natures present within us. One is truly ours (the Spirit), the other is an imposter (the flesh) which is no longer our nature, but with which we must contend until we are released from its presence by the resurrection of the body.