

The Bow of Judgment and Redemption

Torah Portion Noach – Genesis 6:9-11:32

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The video version is available at: <https://youtu.be/R6OdH4yMBpA>

The scripture reading is Genesis 6:9-22, 9:8-17

This week's Torah Portion contains what is, perhaps, the most well-known story in the Hebrew scriptures, that of Noah, the ark he built, and the flood which destroyed all living things outside the ark. The story of Noah and the ark is perhaps one of the earliest stories we are exposed to in Sunday School as young children. Noah and the ark are, in many cases, depicted in illustrated or cartoon form giving the illusion of fantasy or fiction. This may be a simple and cute idea for children, but it does tend to establish or reinforce a false narrative.

Much of today's scientific community dismiss the biblical account of creation and the flood contained in the first eleven chapters of Genesis as purely myth and convenient legend saying there is no evidence to support the notion of such a flood as depicted in the Bible account of Genesis. But if one were to step back from preconceived notions and fashionable theory, one would recognize the anomalies in the scientific data for what they represent. As we mentioned last week, there are questions and observations which modern science cannot answer.

The story of Noah, the Ark, and ultimately the covenant that God makes with Noah are more than an account of history. On a faith level, the story of Noah provides one of the most powerful pictures of the promise of a future redeemer to be found anywhere in scripture.

In this study today we will only scratch the surface of the mysteries contained in the story of Noah. The account of Noah and the flood is primarily a story of judgment and redemption. Because of the sins committed by mankind, God had determined to destroy all the living things on the earth. But there was one righteous man by the name of Noah.

Genesis 5:29 NKJV 29 And he called his name Noah, saying, "This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD has cursed."

In Hebrew his name is Noach, number 5146 in the Strong's Concordance meaning quiet rest or a resting place. Right away we can see a connection between Noah and Messiah Yeshua. In keeping with his name, Noah provides comfort or peace in the midst of a wicked world. Yeshua Himself also promises us rest. We find rest in taking on His yoke.

Matthew 11:29 NKJV 29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

After His ascension, Yeshua promised to give His disciples the Holy Spirit as their rest and comfort.

John 14:26-27 NKJV 26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. 27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Noah was a righteous man, he walked with God all the while evil raged all around him.

Genesis 6:9-11 NKJV 9 This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

We have learned in our recent studies that in the time of Yeshua there was much violence, evil and corruption in the land of Israel, just like there was in the time of Noah. And just like Yeshua, Noah's primary message to the world around him was one of repentance. The world ignored Noah's preaching about coming judgment. They continued with their every-day lives not noticing or caring about the evil around them or the sin they themselves were committing. In Noah's time, the people continued to live in their evil ways and thus brought judgment on themselves. The people of Yeshua's time acted much the same way. Yeshua even mentions Noah while teaching His disciples stating that the world will experience such a time again when he returns.

Matthew 24:38-39 NKJV 38 "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

At the time of Noah, God was about to judge the inhabitants of the earth, but not before preparing for a new beginning. As a matter of fact, Noah's name could also mean "beginning of new life." In the Hebrew, Noah is spelled with a letter Noon, which means life, and the Chet which is the eighth letter signifying a new beginning. So, one interpretation of Noah's name is "beginning of new life!"

Because of Noah's righteousness, God made a way for Noah and his household to survive the coming judgment. God told Noah build something rather unusual.

Genesis 6:12-14 NKJV 12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. 13 And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. 14 "Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.

I'm sure that building such an ark was no easy task for Noah and his sons, but God had a plan. We all know the story about the flood, the ark, and all the animals marching into the ark two by two. Once completed and the provisions were loaded, the animals were gathered, and Noah and his family were safely sealed inside, God released the flood waters of judgment upon the earth. Noah and his family were all safe inside while the wrath of God raged outside.

After the flood, God made a covenant with Noah and with all the living creatures that came out of the ark. This covenant has two parts. One is the promise that God would not destroy the earth or all living things again by a flood with the bow as a sign of that promise. The covenant was between God and all the generations of man but also between God and all living creatures, the animals saved on the ark with Noah.

Genesis 9:11-13 NKJV 11 "Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

Notice that this covenant with Noah does not say that judgment would not come on mankind again, only that it would not be by means of a flood that destroys the whole earth. Peter says that a future judgment will come by fire.

2 Peter 3:5-7 NKJV 5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished,

being flooded with water. 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Why didn't God just destroy the entire earth and start over. He created the universe once, He could do it again, right? Before God made a covenant with Noah, He had made a promise to Eve back in the Garden.

Genesis 3:15 NKJV 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

So, what we see in the promise to Eve is both a promise of a redeemer and a promise of the judgment. This point is important as we look at this covenant God made with Noah and all living creatures following the flood. God needed to fulfill His promises!

There was something special that God chose as a sign of His covenant with Noah. This sign was and is an important part of the story. It is, of course, the rainbow.

Genesis 9:12-15 NKJV 12 And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: 13 "I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. 14 "It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; 15 "and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

In the Hebrew scriptures, the word is just "bow." There is no separate word for rainbow. It is Keh'-sheth, number 7198 meaning a bow for shooting, as in an archer, figuratively strength. To understand that the sign of the covenant with Noah is a rainbow, we need to pay attention to the context as the bow being seen in the sky.

However, from the Hebraic perspective both meanings for the word "bow" are appropriate. As a bow, the sign is of strength or power, justice and judgment. As a rainbow it is the sign of the promised Messiah. In the second coming of Yeshua, these two meanings, merge into one.

First, the bow is a symbol of the strength or power of a nation. God breaks the bow of a nation He will destroy. The bows of the nations that sin against God are broken in judgment.

Jeremiah 51:56 NKJV 56 Because the plunderer comes against her, against Babylon, And her mighty men are taken. Every one of their bows is broken; For the LORD is the God of recompense, He will surely repay.

God also broke the bow or strength of Israel when they were taken into captivity to Assyria.

Hosea 1:4-5 NKJV 4 Then the LORD said to him: "Call his name Jezreel, For in a little while I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, And bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. 5 It shall come to pass in that day That I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel."

A bow needs an arrow and one of God's arrows is his word or Torah. The root word from which Torah comes is number 3384, Yaw-raw' meaning to flow as water. But Yaw-raw' also means to shoot as in an arrow, to teach or point out.

In our English Bibles, Torah is normally translated as "law." Paul says the purpose of the law is to be our tutor, or guide.

Galatians 3:19,24 NKJV 19 What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator... 24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Paul also says that the law reveals what is in men's hearts which either leads to repentance and life, or judgment and death.

Romans 3:19-20 NKJV 19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The Torah is God's written word. Messiah Yeshua is the Living Word. The prophet Isaiah speaks of Messiah as an arrow of God.

Isaiah 49:1-2 NKJV 1 "Listen, O coastlands, to Me, And take heed, you peoples from afar! The LORD has called Me from the womb; From the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name. 2 And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, And made Me a polished shaft; In His quiver He has hidden Me."

God told Noah that the sign of this covenant is everlasting and would appear in the sky with the clouds.

Genesis 9:14-17 NKJV 14 "It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; 15 "and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 "The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." 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."

The prophet Daniel describes the return of Messiah Yeshua as coming on the clouds.

Daniel 7:13 NKJV 13 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.

Yeshua Himself referred to His coming on the clouds of heaven.

Matthew 24:30-31 NKJV 30 "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The apostle John uses the image of the rainbow many times in his final epistle of Revelation. In this letter, John describes the rainbow in terms representing both judgment and redemption.

During the trumpet judgments described in Revelation beginning in chapter 8, destruction comes on one third of the earth. After the sixth trumpet, an angel appears "clothed with a cloud and with a rainbow around his head" Calling to mind the sign of the covenant with Noah.

Revelation 10:1-3 NKJV 1 I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. 2 He had

a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, 3 and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices.

The bow was to be a sign, not just to Noah, but to God to remind Him of His covenant obligation, the promise not to destroy all living things with a flood and to bring a redeemer who breaks the head of the serpent to fulfill the promise God made to Eve. Paul says that Yeshua will bring rest to the saints and everlasting destruction to those who don't believe in Messiah Yeshua.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 NKJV 6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

John's vision recorded in the book of Revelation illustrates the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise and covenant with Noah. Even though Yeshua will come with the dark clouds of judgment, the brightness of His presence will be visible. He will appear with the bow of judgment in the sky, shoot His arrows, and defeat the enemy. Revelation describes the outcome of the battle. The serpent is bruised through the defeat of the beast and locked away for a thousand years.

Revelation 19:20-21 NKJV 20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

And continuing in chapter 20:1-2

Revelation 20:1-2 NKJV 1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

The rainbow in the clouds, this sign of God's covenant, is both a reminder of God's judgment and a promise of redemption. After the final battle is won, there will no longer be a need for judgment and the battle bow will be cut off.

Zechariah 9:9-10 NKJV 9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. 10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be 'from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.'

The story of Noah, the flood of Judgment, and the ark of redemption is far more than a simple Sunday School story. In the story of Noah, we get a glimpse of the ultimate redemption of mankind. In Noah we see a shadow of the ultimate redeemer, Messiah Yeshua. If we dismiss Noah and the flood as a mere myth, we ultimately must reject the redemptive power of Yeshua.

Noah was a man of great faith in a spiritually dark world. The writer of Hebrews perhaps said it best when he wrote, "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark

for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”

Study Questions:

1. What is the significance of God making this covenant with Noah (mankind) and with the animals (all flesh)? What is the fulfillment of this covenant?
2. Related to question 1, Genesis 6:12 says that all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. If covenant God made following the flood was with “all flesh”, which includes the animal world, how does this change our understanding or perception of the work before the flood?
3. It says in Genesis 6:9 that Noah walked with God. What does it mean to Walk with God? Who else in scripture walked with God?
4. The bow in the sky following the flood is clearly a sign of redemption. Are there other places in scripture, where a bow is mentioned, indicating redemption as opposed to judgment?
5. Compare the coming judgment by fire to the judgment by the flood? How is the judgment by fire different that the flood?
6. What new insight did you gain from this teaching? How do you respond to this new insight? How will you realign your life based on this new understanding?