

GENESIS

Lesson 7 - Chapters 6 and 7

We spent all of our time last week discussing evil and where it came from, and what role it plays in our lives. I'm not going to review it because we need to move on. So either get the CD or listen to it online at www.torahclass.com if you think you want to hit the high points again.

Rather, let's spend just a short time to finish up Genesis chapter 6 and the Lord's instructions to Noah about the Ark.

RE-READ GENESIS 6:14 – end

We see an interesting God-principle set down in the detailed instructions for the Ark: nothing is left for Noah to do but to accept God's means of salvation for him and his family by following its prescription exactly. Here we also see that even Salvation is (in a way) a co-operative effort between mankind and God. God's role is to provide it; mankind's role is to accept it by means of a moral choice of our will. But as much as Salvation is by grace, there are obligations that we have to God and some of it involves actions on our part.

Noah and his family had to begin by believing what God told them: first, that mankind was wicked and God would soon destroy them. Second, that there IS a means to escape the destruction. Third, that means of escape is designed by the Lord and ONLY that means is available. Fourth, Noah would have to act in order for his deliverance to come about. So it took great faith on Noah's part to take God at His word when the current circumstances didn't seem to indicate how such a thing could possibly take place. And it took effort; it was not simply a passive acknowledgment or intellectual acquiescence.

In Hebrew the Ark is called a **tevah**; it is the same term used for the basket that baby Moses would be placed in centuries later. A **tevah** is a box-like craft that is not the same thing as a boat or a ship. It is simply a device that floats, rudderless, and without a crew to operate it. The idea is that a **tevah** is guided only by God's hand and providence and mankind is but a passenger.

The Ark is to be of gopher wood, a type of wood that is unknown. It was to be enormous by

any standard: 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and almost 5 stories in height. Marine engineers calculate that it would have had a displacement of about 43,000 tons. It would hold its precious cargo of life on 3 decks, and have a skylight and apparently one entry ramp in its side.

Notice in verse 18 that 4 men with their wives may enter the Ark; this is the sum total of humanity that will be saved. The number of humans who have been elected and set apart to restart life on the planet totals 8. Eight is a number of great significance in the Scriptures; 8 (appropriately for our story) is the number of redemption and will remain so throughout the entire Bible.

Notice that the entire sphere of animated life on land and in the air is to be brought on board; everything from lizards to birds. The entire matrix of life is to be saved as the catalyst for new life. Each species, or family, is represented by one male and one female. This is the basic Biblical family unit. All else is unauthorized and is a perversion. The concept that two males or two females can bond together in marriage into a family unit, and from that even produce a new generation, is recent and not only manmade but rebellious.

We also see something else important: the basic divinely ideal family unit is defined and it is to consist of ONE male and ONE female; not ONE male and several females. So even in the narrative of Noah's Ark we get the God-principle not only of marriage being a permanent bonding of male and female, but also of marriage being exclusive and monogamous.

Now let's also use episode to define another term: food. I want to deal with this because food is such wedge issue between the Church and the Jewish people, and even causes severe dissension within the Church itself. Genesis 1:29-30 explains what food is at this point in history.

²⁹ Then God said, "Here! Throughout the whole earth I am giving you as food every seed-bearing plant and every tree with seed-bearing fruit.

³⁰ And to every wild animal, bird in the air and creature crawling on the earth, in which there is a living soul, I am giving as food every kind of green plant." And that is how it was.

Food for mankind and animals was plants and plants alone. Now did that mean that some animals didn't eat other animals and that man did NOT eat meat at this time? No; rather it meant that God defined food as plants and therefore when animals or humans ate animals (or other things) they were eating things that were NOT food. Not even fish was for food as of this time.

Let's explore that. Noah was told to bring food into the Ark for his family and for the animals. What is food? Food is what is appropriate as a source of nutrition for our bodies. The question that is larger, however, is: who defines what is appropriate and what is not? What SHOULD be consumed as food contrasted with what might be (but ought not to be) consumed as food.

God defined food in the first chapter of Genesis. However man soon decided he preferred something else to be added to his diet. But to God's way of thinking humans (and apparently some animals) began to eat things that are forbidden because they are NOT food.

Look: can you eat dirt? Of course you can and anyone who has a child or grandchild has probably watched in horror as they gulped down a mouthful of dirt before you could stop them. Do you know why they ate dirt? Because in some way it smelled and tasted good to them. So why would you want to stop them? Because dirt is not food; dirt is for GROWING food. Food, by God's definition, is not merely anything that you can manage to get into your mouth and swallow, or anything that might taste reasonably good.

That is the entire point of God carefully defining what His people may and may not eat in the Law of Moses. God has carefully defined what food is and what food is not. Eating food that is not kosher (so to speak) is to eat things that are not food. Now of course Hebrew Tradition has created a lot of rules and regulations on the subject and much of it is of a very questionable nature. Rules have been created that seem to go well beyond the rather simple intent of what is proper eating as described in the Torah. But the bottom line is this: when the Bible uses the term food, it by definition means things that God has assigned for men to eat. Whether Old Testament or New, when a Hebrew speaks of food it ONLY means Kosher food because all else is NOT food. You'll never see in the Bible the word "kosher" or "authorized" or "clean" used as a modifier to the word "food" because it would be redundant. Food is ONLY things that are divinely authorized and clean (ritually clean) and meant to be eaten.

This chapter ends with the important words that Noah did everything that God told him to do.

READ GENESIS CHAPTER 7 all

This chapter opens with an invitation...or, for the Baptists among us, an altar call: God says "come, Noah, you and all your household.....come into the Ark". Noah may have built the Ark, but God prepared it all. And, it wouldn't be the last Ark of refuge that God would prepare. This was a very exclusive invitation that was issued; only those whom God chose could come in. This invitation even included an RSVP.....Noah had to respond, he had to act. Sitting and doing nothing was death. What was the dividing line between those who received the invitation and those who were denied....those who were chosen and those who were not? One had to be

tzaddik.....Hebrew for righteous. And, God says that Noah was the only righteous man left on earth.

If we pull this pattern forward a few thousand years, we find that God has prepared a final Ark, Yeshua, Jesus Christ, as a safe haven for the righteous....the tzaddik..... for that day when He pours out His wrath and ends the world as we know it.....**again**. For, joyfully, I can tell you with full assurance that God does NOT destroy the good along with the wicked.

Now, it is often said that the biggest difference between the ways of God of the OT, and the ways of God of the NT, is that a man had to **work** to attain his righteousness in the OT, and the man of the NT receives it as a gift. Further, that it was good works that led a man to some undefined kind of Salvation in the OT, and grace through faith that brings a man to a well-defined kind of Salvation in the NT. Well, we could spend many weeks talking about this, but let me just spend a few moments to dispel some really horrible scholarship, and anti-Semitic theology, and replace it with the truth.

It is true that whether one reads the works (commentaries) of the most ancient of Hebrew sages, or the later ones (the Rabbis), generally we find a great emphasis is placed on DOING God's commands....what is usually called works and legalism; but, the **reason** for the Hebrews' obsession with DOING.....their motivation..... is far less a matter of gaining something from it, than from obedience due to the overwhelming gratefulness of being one of God's chosen people. When we first become Believers, and when we study the great Christian scholars, it is clear to us that grace is the key to our relationship with God. But, it is also usually taught that grace is a NT era dispensation that was not available prior to the birth of Christ. And, that righteousness granted to the worshipper, completely unmerited and unearned, is a NT concept. Hence we get this false proposition constantly put forth to us in our houses of worship: that we must either choose Law or Grace. The idea being that we could choose to attempt to follow the Law (the OT, the way it is said that the Hebrews did things) well enough to "earn" or "merit" our righteousness and therefore our place in Heaven (but, of course, we will ultimately fail), or we can choose to have faith in Christ, and by grace be 100% guaranteed our place in Heaven. Let me tell you something: never, never, never does God set that choice before us in the Bible. That dynamic simply doesn't exist anywhere in the Holy Scriptures. It is a manmade doctrine based on assuring that Jews are painted in a bad light, and they stay apart from the gentile church. Now, just so you don't get the wrong idea, OF COURSE the only way to a relationship with God is unmerited grace, a free gift of God, given by means of Jesus.

The fact is, though, that the Hebrews did NOT believe they could "work their way to heaven". And, they fully recognized that righteousness had to be a gift from God....that is, by grace....because even the best of men weren't that different from the worst. If you enjoy challenges, I recommend you read a book by E.P. Sanders, considered one of the great mainstream Christian scholars of our day; that book is Paul and Palestinian Judaism. Because

he does a groundbreaking study on what Judaism and therefore, Paul, was all about. What he meant by what he said. It is a daunting book to study; because he brings extensive quotes from the Mishna, Zohar, and Talmud to draw a picture of what he calls Palestinian Judaism. Though it is not the point of his book, he dispels many myths and ignorant accusations flung constantly against the religion of the Hebrews that usually accuses them of being a legalistic and work-your's-way-to-salvation based faith.

Since we are studying the time of the Great Flood, I'd like to offer as an example of this a quote from the Mishna Rabbah (an ancient Hebrew commentary) about **why** it was that Noah was saved, but the rest of the world wasn't. Understand, this is certainly not the ONLY Jewish view on the subject, but it is by far the most accepted. Also understand, that we are reading from the writings of the same Hebrew men that gentile Christian scholars say had no understanding of grace, nor did grace even exist until after Jesus' advent. Interestingly, though, the very first use of the word **grace** in the Bible is not found in the NT Gospels, but in Genesis 6. Listen carefully now to an excerpt from Mishna Rabba Bereshith.....that is, Mishna Rabba commentary on the book of Genesis. **1. BUT NOAH FOUND GRACE IN THE EYES OF THE LORD (VI, 8). He delivereth him that is innocent (i naki), yea, thou shalt be delivered through the cleanness of thy hands (Job XXII, 30). R. Hanina¹ said: Noah possessed less than an ounce (unkia)² [of merit]. If so, why was he delivered? Only 'Through the cleanness of Thy hands'.³ This agrees with what R. Abba b. Kahana said: For it repenteth Me that I have made them and Noah. But Noah was left only because he found grace; hence, BUT NOAH FOUND GRACE IN THE EYES OF THE LORD.**

In other words, when the Rabbi said that Noah was delivered only by the cleanness of THY hands, the "thy hands" were referring to God's hands, not Noah's own hands. Further, where it says that Noah only possessed an ounce of merit, it is simply an expression that means Noah had very little merit in his life. So little, that, according to these Rabbis, God didn't just repent that he made all men, except for Noah; He repented that He made all men INCLUDING Noah. So, it is somewhat of a mystery, the Rabbis thought, as to what it was that caused God to save Noah over and against some other person or people. Their answer? Grace. Unmerited favor.

Were they wrong? Did, indeed God expect them to work their way to righteousness (since we are, after all, in the earliest part of the OT), back in those pre-Jesus, ancient days? Well, these leaders of the Hebrews didn't think so. And, listen to this reference to Abraham, found in Genesis 15:6.....^{NAS} **Genesis 15:6 Then he (Abraham) believed in the LORD; and He (God) reckoned it to him as righteousness.**

Abraham trusted God, and so God says He will consider that trust as the reason to GIVE the designation of righteous to Abraham. That is EXACTLY what happens when we trust in Jesus. The word we used for this is grace. Noah didn't earn his righteousness and we don't earn ours; he and we simply received grace. That part of the equation has NEVER been any

different from the beginning of the world until today.

So it is high time that the wrong-minded Christian doctrine of demanding we choose the Law or choose Grace be put to rest. That choice was never put before us by the Lord. The Law was never a salvation document. From the beginning, all throughout the OT, and right on to Revelation, Grace has always been the only way to a right relationship with the Lord. The Hebrews believed that, just as we believe it. This dynamic was set up for the sole purpose of getting us to believe that, for the Christian, the Bible begins at the book of Matthew. That the OT is obsolete. That the Torah is now abolished. And, that the Jews were ditched by God in favor of the gentile Church. None of which is so.

How often we have all seen pictures in Bibles, church books, and even schoolbooks of the animals entering the Ark, two by two. Yet, that is only half the story; because when we look carefully at verse 2, we see that in fact only SOME animals are to come in a single pair, and others are to come in 7's.....that is, seven pairs, 14 animals. 14 of each clean animal, but only 2 each of the unclean animals, are to be taken aboard the Ark.

Here we are introduced to the concept of clean and unclean animals.....in Hebrew, **tahor**, clean, and **tamei**, unclean. Now, in our modern gentile Christian Church, a church that was long ago stripped of all Jewish connections, this concept of clean and unclean is foreign to our minds, and we typically assign all sorts of fanciful and erroneous meanings to it.....or we just mentally bypass those words. In time, in Torah Class, we will carefully study the concepts of clean and unclean, and I promise you a wealth of understanding of God, the Bible, and how the spiritual and physical Universe operates as a result.

One example of our sad ignorance about clean and unclean is contained in the famous (and excellent, I might add) commentary by Henry Morris called The Genesis Record; there he explains that perhaps the clean animals were animals that God decided would be good for "domestication and fellowship with man", and the unclean were not. Not hardly. Any Jewish child could tell you exactly what clean and unclean is: clean means ritually pure and unclean means NOT ritually pure. In the case of animal sacrifices to God, only "clean" animals may be used. In the case of food, only clean animals may be eaten. In the sense of food, the common word we use for it today is "Kosher".

But, the question comes, were these animals....or at least some of them..... being loaded onto the Ark for the purpose of being part of the food supply during their confinement in the Ark.....food for human consumption? Well, up to now, the only suitable food for humans was plant life. Let me pause here for a moment and remind you of the principle that we discussed a few minutes ago; it is that the term "food" refers ONLY to things that are authorized by God as edible. In other words, to give an extreme example, if we were discussing the benefits of dental floss, nobody would picture dental floss as a possible food source. Conversely, if we were

discussing food, nobody would ever include dental floss as a possible member of our food triangle. For any of us, food is what we can eat, and that is meant for that purpose. So, for a Hebrew, meat that is NOT kosher is not food. Ritually unclean meat is not forbidden food.....it's not food at all. So, when the Bible speaks of food, it in no way is referring to things that weren't within the current range of normal and customary. And, remember, the Bible is a Hebrew document, written by Hebrews, in a Hebrew cultural setting. This is so from Genesis to Revelation. In the case of Genesis and Noah, prior to the flood, food was ONLY green plants. Animals weren't any more a candidate to be food than a rock or a handful of dirt. Noah and his children weren't hungry for a nice juicy steak.....because meat wasn't food; food was edible plants.

Man, at the time of the Flood and on back to Adam, had not been given the concept of eating other living creatures as a food source. I have little doubt that those of the evil line of Cain, as they grew ever wicked, likely killed animals and even ate some of their flesh, but it was absolutely akin to cannibalism. But, since God called Noah a righteous man, I also have NO doubt that Noah and his family remained vegetarians. So, prior to the Flood, to Noah, clean and unclean simply meant animals that God had told him were suitable for sacrifice or those that weren't.....food wasn't part of the equation.

Now, which animals were clean, and which weren't? We can't be 100% certain. Many centuries into the future, God would give Moses a comprehensive list of clean animals. We only know for sure that Sheep, lambs, were clean in Noah's day, because that's the only animal mentioned as being sacrificed, and that by Abel. That said, it is reasonable to conclude that the classifications of clean and unclean stayed the same until the era of Moses; at Mt. Sinai, the list of those animals suitable for sacrifice became harmonized with those suitable for food.

So, the animals, Noah, his wife, their children, and their son's wives are now safely on the Ark. Then, there is a solemn pause. A seven-day pause before God poured out His devastation upon the World. I don't know if this was simply a practical thing, to give Noah some time to accomplish some last few details....or.... if it was time for Noah and his family to contemplate what was about to happen. Or perhaps it was time for those who were outside the Ark to reconsider; those who watched that man whom they considered a religious wacko and his kids build that enormous wooden vessel and then climb inside of it. Unfortunately, even those who may have reconsidered were too late. Some may well have received spiritual mercy from Adonai, but none would escape the horror of the deluge; they would have to watch everyone they loved drown, as they themselves also perished.

In the very near future, this will once again play out. And, it is indeed a replay of the Great Flood, which we'll see in a minute. God's people will suddenly be removed by means of our heavenly Ark, Yeshua, and tucked away for safekeeping. And, then as God pours His wrath out on the World for the final time, millions of non-believing people will realize that God is real,

and everything He told us and forewarned us about, was true. But, it will be too late. Death will be upon them, and there will be no escape. Turn your Bibles to Matthew 24 and let's look at Christ's own words to verify that what I just told you is in no way allegory: it is literal and it is very straightforward.

READ Matthew 24:30-44.

The end of mankindor in the Hebrew "*kol yeyum*", which means "all existence", was just hours away as Noah and his family and that huge menagerie huddled together inside the Ark. I'm not sure any of us can imagine what must have been going through Noah and his family's minds as they heard the frantic screams of their neighbors and friends and family, knowing they could not help them.

There really is very little detail about the Flood itself yet there are a couple of things we should take notice of and tuck away for future reference. There is no doubt that numbers have great significance in the Bible; they can be literal, or they can be symbolic, and usually they are both literal and symbolic at the same time (another aspect of the Reality of Duality).

After the number 7, 40 is the second most used number in the Bible. It is usually used when a trial or a testing of some kind is involved; or as a period of probation. It can mark something that is going to be what we might think of as a passing from one era into another. The Hebrews see forty as the age of wisdom. The Greeks saw forty as the pinnacle of life. And, it's from the combination of these two views that Christian tradition makes a generation to equal 40 years. Here in the Flood account, we'll find that it rained 40 full days (that is, forty 24 hour periods), and then it was another 40 days until the tops of mountains appeared and the window in the Ark was opened. Jacob, called Israel, was embalmed for 40 days. Moses was on the mountain at Sinai and without food for 40 days. Jesus fasted out in the wilderness for 40 before being tempted by the Devil (and, you might find it interesting to know that WHERE Yeshua fasted was Ofra.....which is now a West Bank Orthodox Jewish settlement that Torah Class financially supports). The 12 spies of the wandering horde of Israel, on their Exodus from Egypt, who went to scout out the inhabitants of the Land of Canaan, did their job for 40 days. In the book of Jonah, Ninevah was granted 40 days of repentance to avoid obliteration. Forty days is the purification time required of a new mother when she gives birth to a male child.

Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rivkah (Rebecca). Moses led Israel in the Wilderness for 40 years. Kings David and Solomon each ruled Israel for 40 years.

We'll see multiples of 40 years used (this is common Hebrew symbology). Moses was said to be 120 years old when died (3 X 40). A new mother is ritually impure for 80 days when birthing a girl child (2 X 40).

I could give many more examples, but perhaps you can now see the connection.

An item of interest, often overlooked, is that it was not simply 40 days of rain that caused the earth's oceans to overflow.....we're also told in V11 that the "fountains of the great deep" burst open and water poured from it as well. This great underground cavern, or perhaps network of caverns, that up to then had been filled with water, now spewed it out onto the surface. NOTE: we've encountered the term "the great deep" before. Back in Genesis 1, we are told that darkness, SPIRITUAL DARKNESS, hovered over the great deep. Could it be that this great deep, being emptied of its water in order to judge the world with a Flood, was also being readied to judge Satan? For in Revelation, we are told that at the end of the Tribulation Satan is going to be thrown into the Abyss, the "abussos", the same word used for "great deep". Could the source of the floodwater, and the place where Satan will be chained up for 1000 years, be the same? Yes, I think it is.

Now, verse 11 tells us that Noah was 600 years old when the rain began. It even gives us the date the Flood began, at least in relation to Noah's life. It says it was in the 2nd month, the 17th day of that month, when the deluge started. Now, there have been many readings on exactly what was being said here; and, the church has these varying ideas of whether that verse was referring to the 17th day of the 2nd month of the Hebrew year, or, the 17th day of the 2nd month of Noah's 600th year of life. Well, it's both. It is tradition that Noah was born on the 1st day of the 1st month.....that is, in our terms, New Years Day. Further, as we'll find in the next chapter, it was going to be the 27th day of the 2nd month that the waters subsided sufficiently for Noah and his family to leave the Ark.....exactly 1 year. How can I say this is exactly one year? Now, keep one thing in mind: this was NOT a solar year, 365 days. This was a Hebrew lunar year. It was 12 New Moons plus 11 days; generally about 359 days. Now, since the numbering of months, the beginning of the Hebrew year was originally in the fall season, it was likely that the flood began in what we would call the first half of November.

Once Noah and his family...specifically, his 3 named sons Shem, Ham, and Yefet.....and all their wives were on board, a 7 day period passed, and then the skies opened up from above, and water welled up from below. And then a truly remarkable thing happened: God physically closed the door of the Ark and shut them in. What better picture of God's control over all things than He Himself closing that door, and thus at that moment sealing the fate of all other inhabitants of the world to death; but to Noah and his family life. And, keep always in mind, that these events give us the patterns that God operates by; they never change. If you want a much more satisfying way to understand the Torah, and the whole Bible.....cease asking the thing we've all been taught to ask: WHY. Rather, look for the pattern, and that will explain God's mind on the matter as much as He has chosen to reveal to us.

Verse 20 tells us that the water kept accumulating on the earth's surface until the highest mountaintops were 15 cubits.....about 25 feet.....under water. Now, let's be very clear about

what died, and what lived, through the flood. Verses 21-23 are to be taken as a whole. Verse 21 gives us the broad categories of what perished, and verse 22 gives further details ABOUT verse 21. Verse 21 is NOT one category of things that perished, and verse 22 another. We're told that all "basar" flesh.....animals, mankind.....died; and in addition birds, and swarming things like mice and rats and lizards and snakes were drowned out. But, this did NOT include fish or sea creatures. I know this because v.22, particularly in the original Hebrew is quite specific about this. It was all that had "the breath of life" in them that died. The Neshemah, what I term the life spirit placed into living creatures, was what died. All plant life did NOT die out.....plants don't have neshemah. Further, it was those living beings that lived on charabah, dry ground, who perished. If it lived on dry land, it died. If it required an extended period of life on dry land, it died. Fish and other aquatic animals lived. Amphibians that could live in the water for extended periods of time lived.

The rain lasted for 40 days and 40 nights. But the water kept increasing for a total of 150 days, even after the rain stopped, for the Abyss had not yet emptied itself of water. The only life....the only nephesh.....living beings, that remained on earth, lay within the belly of the Ark.

We'll continue next week.