



Lesson 6 “Noah . . . Prepared an Ark to the Saving of His House ”

Moses 8:19-30

Genesis 6-9; 11:1-9

Purpose: To help class members desire to live worthily and avoid the evils of the world.

The Story of Noah is the story of obedience to the Holy Ghost. Noah was called of God.

It is the account of a prophet who faced overwhelming opposition to what he was doing, but choose to follow God. Concentration should be of what Noah did and not on the physical nature of the flood. Identified by Joseph Smith as the Angel Gabriel, Noah announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias. He announced the birth of Jesus to Mary (Luke 1:11-38). He is the first and premiere *Elias*, especially the Elias who was to restore all things, "Elias [is the prophet] to whom I have committed the keys of bringing to pass the restoration of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began, concerning the last days" (D&C 27:6, see also D&C 110:12).

"There is a third group of people-those who accept the literal message of the Bible regarding Noah, the ark, and the Deluge. Latter-day Saints belong to this group. In spite of the world's arguments against the historicity of the Flood, and despite the supposed lack of geologic evidence, we Latter-day Saints believe that Noah was an actual man, a prophet of God, who preached repentance and raised a voice of warning, built an ark, gathered his family and a host of animals onto the ark, and floated safely away as waters covered the entire earth. We are assured that these events actually occurred by the multiple testimonies of God's prophets. (Donald W. Parry, "The Flood and the Tower of Babel," Ensign, Jan. 1998, 36)

The Book of Moses

See Supplement Lesson 1.

Genesis

A Greek word meaning “origin” or “beginning.” In the book of Genesis we find an account of many beginnings, such as the creation of the earth, the placing of animals and man thereon, the introduction of sin, the revelation of the gospel to Adam, the beginning of tribes and races, the origin of various languages at Babel, and the beginning of the Abrahamic family leading to the establishment of the house of Israel. Joseph’s role as a preserver of Israel is also given emphasis.

The structure of the book of Genesis rests on several genealogies. Each new section begins "These are the generations," and there follows a genealogical list of certain portions of family history. Some major divisions of Genesis are:

1. *Adam*
2. *Noah*
3. *Abraham*.
4. *Isaac*.
5. *Jacob*.

God's relation to Israel holds the first place throughout in the writer's mind. The introductory chapters are a history of the world as a preparation for the history of the chosen seed. The object of the book is to teach religious history. The book of Genesis is the true and original birthplace of all theology. It contains the ideas of God and man, of righteousness and judgment, of responsibility and moral government, of failure and hope, that are presupposed through the rest of the Old Testament and that prepare the way for the mission of Christ.

In latter-day revelation we find many sources of information that clarify and substantiate the record of Genesis. The Joseph Smith Translation especially, a portion of which is presented in the book of Moses, offers the best available account of the early chapters. Of exceptional worth is Moses 1, giving an account of some visions and experiences of Moses previous to and in preparation for writing Genesis. This chapter is an introduction to Genesis, just as Genesis is an introduction to the remainder of the Bible. Other chapters of Moses specify certain events that took place previous to the creation of the earth and form a proper setting thereunto, such as the selection of the Savior in the Grand Council and the rebellion of Lucifer. The book of Moses also supplies many other valuable concepts, including the revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ to Adam, Enoch, and all the early patriarchs.

Other fruitful sources of latter-day revelation that clarify Genesis are the Book of Mormon, especially 1 Ne. 5 and Ether; Doctrine and Covenants, secs. 29, 84, 107; and the book of Abraham. Among other things, latter-day revelation certifies to Moses as the original author of Genesis.

Commentary:

Moses 8:19-30

19 And the Lord ordained Noah after his own order, and commanded him that he should go forth and declare his Gospel unto the children of men, even as it was given unto Enoch.

. *"The Priesthood was first given to Adam... then to Noah, who is Gabriel: he stands next in authority to Adam in the Priesthood; he was called of God to this office, and was the father of all living in this day, and to him was given the dominion. These men held keys first on earth, and then in heaven." (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 157)*

22 And God saw that the wickedness of men had become great in the earth; and every man was lifted up in the imagination of the thoughts of his heart, being only evil continually.

"The Flood was an act of mercy, not an act of vengeance. The generation of Noah was so wicked that only an act of cleansing of immense magnitude could allow the next generations a chance to live by higher principles. As will be necessary at the second coming of Christ, evil must be eliminated, whether it be through repentance or through destruction." (Kent P. Jackson, "An Age of Contrasts: From Adam to Abraham," Ensign, Feb. 1986, 29)

23 And it came to pass that Noah continued his preaching unto the people, saying: Hearken, and give heed unto my words;

Let me ask, what did the Lord do before He sent the flood? He sent Noah among them as a preacher of righteousness; He sent Enoch; He sent many Elders among the people, and they prophesied to them that unless they repented, judgment would overtake them; that God would overwhelm the earth with a flood and destroy the inhabitants thereof..

Thus we see the dealings of God with those people. Noah had nothing to do but to preach the Gospel, and obey the word of the Lord. We have nothing to do but attend to the same things. We then leave the inhabitants of the earth in the hands of God. It is not for us to judge them; for the Lord says: "judgment is mine and I will repay." (Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 24: 292-293)

24 Believe and repent of your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, even as our fathers, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost, that ye may have all things made manifest; and if ye do not this, the floods will come in upon you; nevertheless they hearkened not.

"This text is significant in that it confirms that Noah, like his predecessors, understood the gospel covenant, including the baptismal ordinance and Jesus Christ's role as Savior." (Donald W. Parry, "The Flood and the Tower of Babel," Ensign, Jan. 1998, 37)

25 And it repented Noah, and his heart was pained that the Lord had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at the heart.

Note that this verse is an important and inspired correction to Genesis 6:6, which reads: "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." The Hebrew word used here, and translated repented in the Bible, is nacham (naw-kham), which literally means "to sigh," "to breathe strongly," "to be sorry," "to pity."

In the Genesis version, God says "it repenteth me that I have made them" (meaning man, see Gen. 6:7). Is God admitting he made a mistake? Is it true, he wished he had never created man? One must pause and remember that of all His glorious creations, none had been so wicked (Moses 7:26).

The Prophet Joseph could not stand the idea. Can God repent? No, He cannot. There are several times in the Old Testament in which the text says that God "repented," usually meaning he changed his mind. In each instance, the Joseph Smith Translation changes the text so that God is not the one repenting.

27 And thus Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord; for Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation; and he walked with God, as did also his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Elder Mark E. Petersen, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote:

"Noah, who built the ark, was one of God's greatest servants, chosen before he was born as were others of the prophets. He was no eccentric, as many have supposed. Neither was he a mythical figure created only in legend. Noah was real. ...

"Let no one downgrade the life and mission of this great prophet. Noah was so near perfect in his day that he literally walked and talked with God. ...

"Few men in any age were as great as Noah. In many respects he was like Adam, the first man. Both had served as ministering angels in the presence of God even after their mortal experience" (Noah and the Flood [1982], 1–2).

30 And God said unto Noah: The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence, and behold I will destroy all flesh from off the earth.

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: "So the Lord commanded Noah to build an ark into which he was to take his family and the animals of the earth to preserve seed after the flood, and all flesh that was not in the ark perished according to the Lord's decree. Of

course this story is not believed by the wise and the great among the children of men, any more than was Noah's story in his day" (Doctrines of Salvation, 3:39).

President John Taylor taught: "God destroyed the wicked of that generation with a flood. Why did He destroy them? He destroyed them for their benefit, if you can comprehend it" (in Journal of Discourses, 24:291; see also 19:158–59 for President Taylor's view of the Flood as an act of love).

Genesis 6

2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

There is a prevailing doctrine in the Christian world that these sons of God were heavenly beings who came down and married the daughters of men and thus came a superior race on the earth, the result bringing the displeasure of the Lord. This foolish notion is the result of lack of proper information, and because the correct information is not found in the Book of Genesis Christian peoples have been led astray.

The correct information regarding these unions is revealed in the inspired interpretation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Book of Moses. Without doubt when this scripture was first written, it was perfectly clear, but scribes and translators in the course of time, not having divine inspiration, changed the meaning to conform to their incorrect understanding. These verses in the Prophet's revision give us a correct meaning, and from them we learn why the Lord was angry with the people and decreed to shorten the span of life and to bring upon the world the flood of purification. The verses referring to this bit of history are as follows:

And Noah and his sons hearkened unto the Lord, and gave heed, and they were called the sons of God.

And when these men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, the sons of men saw that those daughters were fair, and they took them wives, even as they chose.

And the Lord said unto Noah: The daughters of thy sons have sold themselves; for behold mine anger is kindled against the sons of men, for they will not hearken to my voice.

And it came to pass that Noah prophesied, and taught the things of God, even as it was in the beginning. (Moses 8:13-16.) (Answers to Gospel Questions, 5 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957-1966], 1: 136.)

4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

Different ways of life differentiate "sons and daughters of God" from "sons and daughters of men" (TG, "Sons and Daughters of God"). Mixed marriages between "godly" and "earthly" partners, such as those between the daughters of the righteous and the sons of the wicked (Moses 8:14-15), contributed to the constant increase of rebels against righteousness.

As hinted in Genesis 6:3 and made clear in the restored records (Moses 8:17-20), the Lord granted humankind one hundred twenty years to repent in response to Noah's prophetic warnings rather than perish in the cleansing flood.

Rather than indicating that they were mythical giants and demigods, as some readers have imagined, the Hebrew name of these vaunted children of the mixed marriages, when they became "mighty men," merely supplied a rationale for unrighteous boasting by their parents and for rejecting Noah's warnings (Gen. 6:4; Moses 8:21). Their Hebrew name, Nephilim, is apparently derived from the verb naphal, "fall"; they are therefore thought by rabbinical commentators to have been "fallen ones" (rather than persons of gigantic stature; the Greek Septuagint rendered the Hebrew word as gigantes, for reasons unknown). Nephilim is one of four different Hebrew words translated "giants" in the King James Version of the Old Testament (Gen. 6:4a; BD, "Giants").

5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

The last days will be rampant with the cardinal sins, just "as in the days of Noah." Society in the days of Noah, scriptures advise, was "corrupt before God" and "filled with violence." (Gen. 6:11-12; Moses 8:28.) Corruption and violence-sound familiar? Both of these awful conditions crest because of surging individual selfishness. When thus engulfed, no wonder men's hearts in our day will fail them because of fear. (See Luke 21:26; D&C 45:26.) Even the faithful can expect a few fibrillations. ("Put Off the Natural Man, and Come Off Conqueror," Ensign, Nov. 1990, 14)

6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

See Moses 8:25–26. The Prophet Joseph Smith stated: "I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors. As it read [Genesis 6:6], 'It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth'; also [Numbers 23:19], 'God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the Son of man, that he should repent'; which I do not believe. But it ought to read, 'It repented Noah that God made man.'" (Teachings, p. 327.)

8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

The Hebrew word JHVH (Jehovah) is rendered as God in Genesis 6:5 and as Lord in Genesis 6:6, for reasons unknown.

Because children born on earth had little chance to learn to choose good from evil when "every man was lifted up in the imagination of the thoughts of his heart, being only evil continually" (Moses 8:22), most people growing up in those circumstances would become corrupted rather than gain exaltation. God in his justice and mercy could not continue to send his children to such an earth (Gen. 6:5, 13; cf. Moses 8:22).

According to Genesis, the Lord was "sorry" and "moved to pity" and to "have compassion" (Gen. 6:6a) on those who suffered in that evil society; but the inspired restoration of this passage indicates that it was Noah whom "it repented" (caused sorrow and regret to) and whose "heart was pained" because God's good earth and humankind had come to such despicable conditions (Moses 8:25).

The cataclysm involving all animate life on land is reported in many places in the scriptures (Gen. 6:13, 17; TG, "Earth, Cleansing of"; "Flood, Noah's"; BD, "Noah"). Its causes and effects help us understand the work of God with humankind in the past and prepare us for the future, for Jesus prophesied similar conditions to come near the end of the wicked world (Matt. 24:37-39; JS-M 1:41-43). The implication is that conditions can again get so bad in this world that continuation of its practices will be intolerable (TG, "Earth, Cleansing of").

9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

The Hebrew word here translated perfect means "complete, whole, or having integrity" (Gen. 6:9c). Noah and his family were people of such quality (Moses 8:13, 27).

The first use of generations in verse 9 is to translate the Hebrew toledoth, which means "genealogical lines," but the second use of generations here is to translate the Hebrew doroth, meaning "cycles" or years of time.

"Walked with God" is a metaphor used to describe a righteous way of life (Gen. 6:9d).

13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

In contrast to the integrity of the family of Noah, "all flesh" were "corrupt," that is, debased and degraded. The "work and glory" of God is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39), but his children too often respond to things sensual and devilish instead. Thereby some descend to subbestial immortality rather than ascend to a godly immortality.

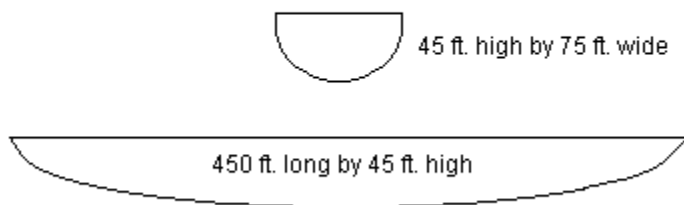
14 Make thee an ark of gopher wood; brooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

"This is the only reference in the Bible to 'gopher wood.' Scholars have speculated that it was a species of cypress or cedar." (Daniel H. Ludlow, A Companion to Your Study of the Old Testament [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981], 120.)

15 And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

"Figuring a cubit to be about eighteen inches, the ark's tonnage was over 40,000 tons, or as large as a good-sized modern passenger ship. To ancient man, such dimensions must have evoked a sense of great awe." (The Torah: A Modern Commentary, ed. by W. Gunther Plaut [New York, The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981], 57)

Dimensions of Noah's Ark



16 A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

Scant information prevents precise visualization of the openings in the ark. Levels of openings may be indicated, but no word for "stories" (printed in italics in the KJV) is given in the Hebrew description. The Hebrew word rendered window is a word for something shining or bright (Gen. 6:16a). Light and ventilation would of course be requisite in a vessel "tight like unto a dish, . . . tight like unto the ark of Noah," as the Book of Mormon describes both the ark and the Jaredite vessels. Those vessels were lighted by miraculously luminous stones (Ether 2:22-25; 3:1-6; 6:7).

17 And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

Man and beast, fowls and creeping things were mentioned (Gen. 6:7); "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen. 6:12); a summary tells what died (Gen. 7:21-22). Mankind had become self-destructive through sin, but how other living things had become incompatible with proper earth life is not revealed. Certainly, though, a cataclysmic change on earth had become necessary.

18 But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

Latter-day revelation tells that the covenant involves all future nations of earth (Gen. 6:18a). The eight souls "saved by water" (1 Pet. 3:20) to begin repopling the world were the four couples mentioned here.

22 Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

At least one pair of every creature to be saved was to be taken aboard; more than one pair of some species was specified later (Gen. 7:2-3). Food to be stored for all these creatures and for the people would certainly have required another miracle; but Noah was directed by the Lord in all that he did, and only by His help was such a project possible at all.

Genesis 7

1 And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

Peter later understood that the few righteous souls of Noah's house were "saved by water" from the wicked world by the Flood. This was a "like figure" to baptism, to cleanse the earth (1 Pet. 3:20-21).

Peter also recorded the revelation that our merciful Redeemer went in the spirit, while his body was in the tomb, and preached to such spirits "in prison" as those "which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah" (1 Pet. 3:19-20). Thus they could learn the gospel, "live according to God in the spirit," and be justly "judged according to men in the flesh" (1 Pet. 4:6). Other scriptures tell how the Lord organized that great mission of mercy so that all who will listen may hear the gospel (D&C 1:11; 138:6-37; Isa. 24:22; John 5:25-29).

3 Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.

"Clean" describes the animals suitable for food or for sacrifice (BD, "Clean and Unclean"). For the year and more they would be aboard the ark (see commentary on Gen. 7:4-12), there could have been a need for more than one pair of each of the "clean" beasts (see Gen. 8:20).

7 And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.

"Here, then, we see a literal enactment of a great symbolic truth that affects all of us: just as God provided a means (the ark) for Noah's family to escape the waters (death), and reach a glorious promised land, he has also provided a way for us to escape spiritual and physical death and attain a land of promise." (L. H. Read, "The Ark of the Covenant: Symbol of Triumph," Ensign, June 1980, 23)

9 There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.

Either Lord or God, given in capital letters, stands for Jehovah, whereas God can refer to either the Father or the Son. Various hypotheses have been contrived to explain such interchanges of the divine names, but lack of unanimity and consistency in their rationales leaves them unconvincing

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

Note the date of the beginning of the deluge, and later the date of the end (Gen. 8:13-14), to avoid the common mistake of thinking the total duration of the Flood was only forty days. It actually lasted a year and ten days.

12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

Rain, supplemented by "fountains of the great deep" (Gen. 7:11b), raised the water level to some twenty-two feet (fifteen cubits) above the mountains (Gen. 7:19-20; 8:5).

Noah did not drive the animals into the ark, for after he and his family entered the ark, the beasts, cattle, creeping things, fowls, and birds "went in unto" him; and "they went in, . . . as God had commanded"

19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and ball the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered.

*“I would like to know by what known law the immersion of the globe could be accomplished. It is explained here in a few words: ‘The windows of heaven were opened’ that is, the waters that exist throughout the space surrounding the earth from whence come these clouds from which the rain descends. That was one cause. Another cause was ‘the fountains of the great deep were broken up’—that is something beyond the oceans, something outside of the seas, some reservoirs of which we have no knowledge, were made to contribute to this event, and the waters were let loose by the hand and by the power of God; for God said He would bring a flood upon the earth and He brought it, but He had to let loose the fountains of the great deep, and pour out the waters from there, and when the flood commenced to subside, we are told ‘that the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained, and the waters returned from off the earth.’ Where did they go to? From whence they came. Now, I will show you something else on the back of that. Some people talk very philosophically about tidal waves coming along. But the question is—How could you get a tidal wave out of the Pacific ocean, say, to cover the Sierra Nevadas? But the Bible does not tell us it was a tidal wave. It simply tells that ‘all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upwards did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.’ That is, the earth was immersed. It was a period of baptism.” (John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26:74–75.)*

Orson Pratt declared:

*“The first ordinance instituted for the cleansing of the earth, was that of immersion in water; it was buried in the liquid element, and all things sinful upon the face of the earth were washed away. As it came forth from the ocean floor, like the new-born child, it was innocent; it rose to newness of life. It was its second birth from the womb of mighty waters—a new world issuing from the ruins of the old, clothed with all the innocence of this first creation.” (In Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 4:20.)*

*“The earth, in its present condition and situation, is not a fit habitation for the sanctified; but it abides the law of its creation, has been baptized with water, will be baptized by fire and the Holy Ghost, and by-and-by will be prepared for the faithful to dwell upon” (Brigham Young, in Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 4:20).*

24 And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

The Genesis account of the Flood concerns a universal cataclysm, not a local one, as confirmed by many other scriptures (Gen. 7:21-24 and fn.; TG, "Flood, Noah's"; "Earth, Cleansing of"; BD, "Noah"). Besides the record of the Judaeo-Christian scriptures, legends of such a deluge and renewal have been preserved by other peoples. The concept is general that a man, his wife, and their married children were saved (see almost any multivolume commentary on the Old Testament).

The Hebrew says the waters were "mighty" upon the earth one hundred fifty days before they began to recede. Then for another one hundred fifty days the waters receded (Gen. 8:3), until in the tenth month, mountaintops reappeared (Gen. 8:5; 7:19-20). Noah waited forty days more and then made weekly checks until the waters had abated and the land masses had dried enough that the people and animals could leave the ark (Gen. 8:6, 10, 12). The great flood had lasted one year and ten days (Gen. 7:11; 8:13-14

Genesis 8

4 And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.

It should be remembered that the Garden of Eden was in the land now known as North America. Although it is not known how far men had moved from that general location in the sixteen hundred years between the fall of Adam and the Flood, it is likely that Noah and his family lived somewhere in the general area. The Bible says that they landed on Mount Ararat when the ark finally came to rest. No location for Mount Ararat is given in the scriptures. The traditional site is a mountain found in northeastern Turkey near the border of Russia. Commenting on the distance traveled, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said:

"We read that it was in the seventeenth day of the second month when the great deep was broken up, and the rain was forty days. The Ark landed at Ararat on the seventeenth day of the seventh month, therefore there were five full months of travel when the Lord drove the Ark to its final destiny. Without any question a considerable distance separated the point where the Ark commenced the journey and where it landed. There can be no question to contradict the fact that during the flood great changes were made on the face of the earth. The land surface was in the process of division into continents. The rivers mentioned in Genesis were rivers that existed in the garden of Eden long before the land was divided into continents and islands. [Genesis 2:11.]" (Answers to Gospel Questions, 2:94.)

11 And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.

"Since early biblical times and the early history of mankind, the olive leaf has symbolized peace and has heralded new life and hope." (Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds., Jacob through Words of Mormon: To Learn with Joy [Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1990], 88.)

13 And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.

The first ordinance instituted for the cleansing of the earth, was that of immersion in water; it was buried in the liquid element, and all things sinful upon the face of the earth were washed away. As it came forth from the ocean floor, like the new-born child, it was innocent; it rose to newness of life. It was its second birth from the womb of mighty waters—a new world issuing from the ruins of the old, clothed with all the innocence of this first creation. (Orson Pratt, Journal of Discourses, 1:333.)

16 Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

When the Lord cleansed and baptized the very earth itself, the man Noah was a mighty prophet, a preacher of righteousness, a legal administrator who represented his God. Noah entered the ark as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ, as a saint in the congregation of Zion, and when he stepped forth onto dry ground one year and [ten] days later, there was no change in his status. He was still the Lord's agent; he still held the priesthood; the gospel was still on earth. True worship continued.

One of Noah's first acts after the flood was to build an altar and offer sacrifices in similitude of the coming sacrifice of the Lamb of God. After his day the gospel continued as it had after Adam's day. Each was the father of all living in his day, and their faithful descendants hearkened to their words and continued to worship Him who is eternal. Thus, pure religion was preserved through the flood, and men continued to work out their salvation as they had before the wicked and ungodly were destroyed in earth's one great deluge. (Bruce R. McConkie, The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary, 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979-1981], 1: 54.)

20 And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

While the Biblical record expressly attests the offering of sacrifices long prior to Israel's exodus from Egypt—e.g. by Abel and by Cain (Gen. 4:3, 44); by Noah after the deluge (Gen. 8:20); by Abraham (Gen. 22:2, 13); by Jacob (Gen. 31:54; 46:1)—it is silent concerning the divine origin of sacrifice as a propitiatory requirement prefiguring the atoning death of Jesus Christ. (James Talmedge, Jesus the Christ: A Study of the Messiah and His Mission According to Holy Scriptures Both Ancient and Modern [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983], 50.)

22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

With gratitude and supplication, Noah offered sacrifices in worshipping God. The restored account records that Noah then prayed that no such curse as the Flood would come again (JST Gen. 9:4-6, as cited for Gen. 8:20a), and the Lord responded (Gen. 9:8-17).

Genesis 9

4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

As in the days of Adam, so again in the days of Noah, God blessed his children and gave them dominion over other living creatures, not to abuse them but to use some for work and some for food. But blood was not to be consumed (Gen. 9:4b-c). As noted here and elsewhere in the scriptures, blood symbolizes mortal life; shedding the blood of man and needlessly shedding the blood of animals is forbidden (Gen. 9:4a, 6a; BD, "Blood"; D&C 49:21).

There is fear and dread between humankind and many other creatures on the earth today; but in an ideal age to come, enmity and fear between animals and man will no longer prevail (Isa. 11:6-9 and fn.).

7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

Sin, violence, and bloodshed had been rampant before the Flood; but in the newly reborn world, preventive laws and warnings were issued against such evils, and punishment by execution for murder was prescribed. The sanctity of the human body derives in part from its having been created in the image of God (Gen. 9:6). Later a law was given that even the body of a person executed was to be safeguarded from degradation (Deut. 21:22-23 and fn.).

17 And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

As noted in Genesis 8:20-22, the Lord and Noah made a covenant and the rainbow became a token of their covenant that floods would never again be the Lord's instrument of cleansing the earth (Gen. 9:13, 17). Perhaps the Lord gave that assurance lest humankind thereafter seek to avoid punishment rather than seek to uphold righteousness (commentary on Gen. 11:4). The covenant also included a promise of Zion (Gen. 9:9a, 11c, 16a; Moses 7:51-52). Nevertheless, when the world in the last days becomes as wicked as it was in the days of Noah, it will again be cleansed—but by a baptism of fire (Matt. 24:37-51; Mal. 3-4).

27 God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

The sons of Noah and his wife were listed in Genesis 5:32; they were to become forefathers of the peoples who would inhabit the earth (Gen. 9:19), details of which follow in Genesis 10. Restored sources (Moses 8:12) indicate that Japheth was forty-two years older than Shem, and Shem was eight years older than Ham; thus, Ham was the youngest son (cf. Gen. 9:24). Just what Ham did to limit his spiritual privileges and those of his son Canaan is not indicated in the scriptures; but nonbiblical legends tell of his stealing Noah's sacred garment so that he might claim the authority granted to its legitimate possessor and pass it on to his sons. Some of this information correlates slightly with scripture (Abr. 1:21-22, 27); but, according to revealed principles (Alma 3:19; 13:3-7; Deut. 24:16; A of F 2; D&C 130:20-21), punishments or blessings come by one's own obedience or disobedience and not that of someone else. A curse of a family, clan, or people endures only as long as the way of life that caused it is perpetuated (TG, "Accountability"; "Chastening"; "Correction"; "Curse"; "Blessings"; "God, Justice of"; "Good Works"; "Inheritance"; "Justice"; "Punishment"; "Retribution").

It is not evident in history that early Canaanites were servants for any substantial time to Semites, but they were conquered and suppressed by Semitic Israel over a long period, beginning at the time of Joshua. In one notable case a Japhetic, or Indo-European people, the Medo-Persians, dwelt near Semites, the Babylonians. Eventually the Medo-Persians conquered Babylon and fostered the return of other Semites, the Judeans, to Jerusalem (2 Chr. 36:20-23; Isa. 44:28-45:4).

29 And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died.

Noah was the last to have a life span of more than nine hundred years, although Shem's was only somewhat less, at some six hundred ten years. Noah thus lived for fifty-eight years after Abraham's birth, and Shem lived for thirty-four years after Abraham's death. The next few generations, however, lived about half as long as Noah did, and after the Tower of Babel episode, half of that. What caused such long life at first and then the phased reductions has not been revealed. Although some hypotheses have been raised, neither research nor revelation has yet sustained any of them (commentary on Gen. 5:1-32).

Genesis 11:1-9

9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Genesis 11 continues the account of the genesis of nations and peoples. Josephus, in Antiquities of the Jews 1.4.2-3, declared that Nimrod, grandson of Ham, "gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power. He also said he would be revenged on God, if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to be able to reach!" Genesis 11:4 indicates that the builders intended the tower to reach heaven and "make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." But the Lord confounded their language and did scatter them (Gen. 11:7-8; Ether 1:33-43).

The biblical writer saw the name Babel as derived from a root word like the Hebrew balal, which means "to suffuse, mix, or confound." Others have seen it as a boastful name, "Gate of God," from bab ("gate") and el ("God"). Information about the pure language of Adam, its preservation by Jared's colony, and its superiority as a language is found in the restored scriptures (Ether 1:33-37; 3:22-28; 12:24-25; Moses 6:4-6). One prophet of the Old Testament prophesied the eventual restoration of the "pure language" (Zeph. 3:9; commentary on Gen. 5:1-32).

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