

LESSON #6

“NOAH . . . PREPARED AN ARK TO THE SAVING OF HIS HOUSE”

By Ted L. Gibbons

INTRODUCTION: How about a little quiz to begin with?

1. Noah was 500 years old when it started to rain T___F___
2. Noah was commanded to put two of every species in the ark T___F___
3. It began to rain as soon as the ark was loaded and the door was shut
T___F___
4. Noah was in the ark for about 6 months T___F___
5. The ark was about the length of a football field T___F___
6. The ark had a door and a window T___F___
7. The ark did not float until after forty days of rain T___F___
8. The water covered everything for 150 days T___F___

This is one of the stories (and there are a lot of them) that we seem to learn from hearsay rather than personal study. I'll give you answers in the conclusion.

What happened in the days of Noah is clearly described in the following quote.

There comes a time when the general defilement of a society becomes so great that the rising generation is put under undue pressure and cannot be said to have a fair choice between the way of light and the way of darkness. When such a point is reached the cup of iniquity is full, and the established order that has passed the point of no return and neither can nor will change its ways must be removed physically and forcibly if necessary from the earth, whether by war, plague, famine, or upheavals of nature (Mormon 2:13-15) (*Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, Vol.6, Part.5, Ch.11, p.140).

Note: the lesson today will follow an outline a bit different from the one in the Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual. My intent is to show you some things—some applications—you might have missed on your last reading of Moses and Genesis. But this is not the lesson to teach. If you are an instructor, use the Teacher's

Manual and the scriptures and put this lesson underneath (far underneath) both of them.

1, HOW DID GOD FEEL ABOUT THE WICKEDNESS ON THE EARTH, AND WHAT DID HE DO ABOUT IT?

1. As the wickedness of men began to increase in the earth (see Moses 5:55; 6:15, etc.), the Lord did what he always does: he called prophets and missionaries to declare repentance

And the Lord said unto me: Go to this people, and say unto them—Repent, lest I come out and smite them with a curse, and they die. (Moses 7:10)

2. Enoch defended his people with such power, and the Lord acted with such miraculous demonstrations of power that the wicked were terrified.

“There also came up a land out of the depth of the sea, and so great was the fear of the enemies of the people of God, that they fled and stood afar off and went upon the land which came up out of the depth of the sea” (Moses 7:14) .

1 Nephi 19:11, D&C 43:235,26, and D&C 88:89-91 describe the preaching that can come when people refuse to listen to the voice of the Spirit.

3. Those who repented following the translation of Zion (the City of Enoch) were also translated, freeing them from the effects of indiscriminate iniquity.

And Enoch beheld angels descending out of heaven, bearing testimony of the Father and Son; and the Holy Ghost fell on many, and they were caught up by the powers of heaven into Zion. (Moses 7:27)

4. God wept when he beheld the wickedness of men on the earth.

And it came to pass that the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and he wept; and Enoch bore record of it, saying: How is it that the heavens weep, and shed forth their tears as the rain upon the mountains? And Enoch said unto the Lord: How is it that thou canst

weep, seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity? (Moses 7:28,29)

5. The language of Moses 8:17 suggests that even in the midst of rampant wickedness, the Spirit continued to labor with men and women.

And the Lord said unto Noah: My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for he shall know that all flesh shall die; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years; and if men do not repent, I will send in the floods upon them. (Moses 8:17)

6. Noah was the final witness, and preached for 120 years (see Moses 8:17) This seems to have been a time when nobody was repenting. If they were, they must have been caught up to the city of Zion, but the record is silent regarding this matter during the peaching of the Prophet Noah.

“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 . . . And it came to pass that Noah continued his preaching unto the people, saying: Hearken, and give heed unto my words; 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” (Moses 8:19, 23,24).

7. It appears that the Lord tried a lesser catastrophe, perhaps in an effort to encourage repentance before utter destruction became necessary. You probably remember that in Helaman 11, in the midst of a great war of destruction, Nephi prayed for a famine, hoping that the people might be induced to repent.

“And so it was done, according to the words of Nephi. And there was a great famine upon the land, among all the people of Nephi. And thus in the seventy and fourth year the famine did continue, and the work of destruction did cease by the sword but became sore by famine . . . And it came to pass that the people saw that they were about to perish by famine, and they began to remember the Lord their God; and they began to remember the words of Nephi” (Hel 11:5,7).

In the days of Methuselah, Noah's grandfather, a similar thing happened.

“And there came forth a great famine into the land, and the Lord cursed the earth with a sore curse, and many of the inhabitants thereof died” (Moses 8:4).

This catastrophe did not seem effective in curtailing the rising tide of wickedness on the planet.

2. GOD PROTECTS THE RIGHTEOUS

1. He endowed Enoch with sufficient power to protect them from their enemies.

“And so great was the faith of Enoch that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them; and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him” (Moses 7:13).

2. He came and dwelt with his people.

“And from that time forth there were wars and bloodshed among them; but the Lord came and dwelt with his people, and they dwelt in righteousness” (Moses 7:16).

3. The glory of the Lord was upon his people.

“The fear of the Lord was upon all nations, so great was the glory of the Lord, which was upon his people. And the Lord blessed the land, and they were blessed upon the mountains, and upon the high places, and did flourish” (Moses 7:17).

4. He allowed them to become a Zion Society.

“And the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor

among them” (Moses 7:18).

5. He took them away from the wicked world.

“And it came to pass that the Lord showed unto Enoch all the inhabitants of the earth; and he beheld, and lo, Zion, in process of time, was taken up into heaven. And the Lord said unto Enoch: Behold mine abode forever” (Moses 7:21).

3. NINE REASONS FOR THE FLOOD

After all earlier attempts to bring men to repentance had failed and the righteous had been removed to a place of safety, the Lord determined to cleanse the earth by water. The scriptures suggest eight things that were happening on the earth, and one that was happening in the premortal world that led to this cataclysm.

1. It appears that organized iniquity had gained such a hold on the earth that it was impossible for the righteous to live in peace except through the intervention of divine power.

“And in those days there were giants on the earth, and they sought Noah to take away his life; but the Lord was with Noah, and the power of the Lord was upon him” (Moses 8:18)

2. The daughters of Noah’s sons, “the sons of God,” began to marry the “sons of men,” that is, they married out of the covenant. Thus the possibility of a righteous seed being preserved in the earth became more and more unlikely. “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” (Moses 8:13-15).

3. The adjectives used in this instance and in some that follow are important. Over and over again we are shown a world where everything has gone wrong. Words such as “all” or “whole” or “every” or “only” suggest a world of

undiluted corruption. The third cause of the flood in my list is that every man was utterly evil.

“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” (Moses 8:22).

4. Again in this description we see a world spiraling into anarchy. Things are almost always bad somewhere, unless a Zion society has been established. But in the days of Noah, we are told that things were bad everywhere. We are not shown corruption in some places nor violence in some cities or nations.

“The earth was corrupt before God, and it was filled with violence. 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” (Moses 8:28,30).

5. The word “corrupt” has synonyms such as *spoiled*, *contaminated*, or *rotten*. My dictionary defines the word as meaning “morally unsound or debased.”

“And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth” (Moses 8:29)

6. God showed Enoch the state of the world after the translation of Zion but before the flood.
“And he beheld Satan; and he had a great chain in his hand, and it veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness; and he looked up and laughed, and his angels rejoiced” (Moses 7:26).

This laughter, this Satanic rejoicing in the face of rampant wickedness and impending destruction, reminds me of a similar statement in the Book of Mormon. This comes from the time just following the destructions in America during the days of darkness.

“Wo, wo, wo unto this people; wo unto the inhabitants of the whole earth except they shall repent; for the devil laugheth, and his angels rejoice, because of the slain of the fair sons and daughters of my people; and it is because of their iniquity and abominations that they

are fallen!” (3 Nephi 9:2).

7. The ultimate purpose of the adversary is to “disrupt, disturb, and destroy the home and the family” (Boyd K. Packer, “The Father and the Family,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 19). Note what the following passage suggests about Satan’s success in this matter in the days of Noah:

“And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father; but behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood” (Moses 7:33)

8. Of course the Lord has created worlds without number, and peopled them with his own children. But this world became unusual because of the iniquity preceding the flood.

“I can stretch forth mine hands and hold all the creations which I have made; and mine eye can pierce them also, and among all the workmanship of mine hands there has not been so great wickedness as among thy brethren” (Moses 7:36)

Regarding this wickedness Brigham Young said,

“We are inhabitants of a world of sin and sorrow; pain and anguish, every ill that can be heaped upon intelligent beings in a probation we are heirs to. I suppose that God never organized an earth and peopled it that was ever reduced to a lower state of darkness, sin and ignorance than this. I suppose this is one of the lowest kingdoms that ever the Lord Almighty created, and on that account is capable of becoming exalted to be one of the highest kingdoms that has ever had an exaltation in all the eternities. In proportion as it has been reduced so it will be exalted, with that portion of its inhabitants who in their humiliation have cleaved to righteousness and acknowledged God in all things” (Journal of Discourses, X. 175).

9. The final cause of the flood takes us to the other side of the veil. The simple truth is that there were billions of spirit children there, waiting and anxious for the blessings of flesh and mortality. But as they peered through the veil at the

condition of the world they were to be sent to, the has some understandable concerns.

“Let us go back to the time when Satan rebelled against the Almighty and drew away one-third of the hosts of heaven. We find that there were pure spirits that stood that test and who had given to them the promise of bodies on this earth. Let us suppose that you and I were there as spirits, awaiting the privilege of taking bodies, and that we could see the wickedness and corruption that was going on upon the earth, and that we could see Prophets going about teaching the principles of righteousness and warning the people of judgments that should come, of the flood that should overwhelm them and of the prisons prepared in which the ungodly should be cast. And we say, "Father, you see the people on the earth that they are wicked and depraved, fallen and corrupt! Yes. Is it right and just that we who have done no wrong should have to enter into such corrupt bodies and partake of the influences with which they are surrounded?" "No," says the Father, "it is not just, and I will cut them off, I will cause the floods to come upon them to destroy them, and I will send those wicked and disobedient spirits into prison," which he did” (John Taylor, JD XXII, 301-302).

I can understand this. If I had been there (and I was) awaiting birth, I would have complained bitterly (if such a thing were possible in that place) about the prospect of being sent into a world without a single source of divine light, a world where everyone was only evil continually, a place filled with violence, a place where everything and everybody was corrupt, a place that was completely veiled with darkness.

CONCLUSION: Now for the answers to the quiz. We have been talking about the lessons regarding the flood in the book of Moses. The quiz questions all come from Genesis and the actual account of the deluge.

1. Noah was 500 years old when it started to rain FALSE Noah was 600 years old (Genesi
2. Noah was commanded to put two of every species in the ark FALSE Clean beasts were taken into the ark by sevens (See Genesis 6:19; 7:2)

3. It began to rain as soon as the ark was loaded and the door was shut FALSE
The rains began after 7 days on the ark (Genesis 7:8-10)
4. Noah was in the ark for about 6 months FALSE The rains began in the second month of the six hundredth year, on the seventeenth day (Genesis 7:11). It was the next year in the second month on the twenty-seventh day that God told Noah to leave the ark (Genesis 8:14-16). They were are the ark for 375 days, plus one week before the rains began.
5. The ark was about the length of a football field FALSE. The ark was 300 cubits. An Old Testament cubit is about 18 inches. Thus the ark was 450 feet long—about a football field and one half.
6. The ark had a door and a window. PROBABLY FALSE. That there was a door is beyond question. The animals and people must have and left entered the ark thereby. Genesis 6:16 speaks of the door, but also of a window. But the footnote for the word *window* in that verse tells us this:

HEB. *Tsohar*; some rabbis believed it was a precious stone that shone in the dark.

Sending out the dove and the raven (Genesis 8:7-12) suggests that the outside world was not readily visible. In fact, Noah could not see the outside until he “removed the covering of the ark, and looked . . .” (Genesis 8:13). The book of Ether suggests that the Jaredite barges were in some ways like the ark (see Ether 6:7). Perhaps it was from the records carried by the Jaredites that the brother of Jared got the idea for the shining stones used to light the windowless barges his people used to cross the ocean. There is a reference in the Jaredite account to the absence of windows in the barges (see Ether 2:23).

7. The ark did not float until after forty days of rain TRUE (Genesis 7:17)
8. The water covered everything for 150 days TRUE (Genesis 7:24; 8:3)

The ark is a symbol. It was real enough, but for those of us who sense the rising and engulfing tides of wickedness and faithlessness in our own day, there is an additional lesson here. We must prepare for the safety of our families by building arks. They will be refuges for us when waves of sin threaten to capsize us and our families. If we have built arks of scripture study and made them *tight*; if we have

built arks of prayer and made them *tight*; if we have built arks of obedience and covenant-keeping and made them *tight*, then our homes and our lives will be like the barges of the Jaredites:

Why make them *tight*? Years ago I spoke at a youth conference in Oregon. During a break, the teenagers gathered in the cultural hall and played *Red Rover*. One side would link arms and then cry, “Red Rover! Red Rover! Send Danny (or someone else) right over!”

Then Danny would run at full speed to the spot he thought weakest in the linkage of arms and try to break through. But if they were holding tightly enough, he would be held back and kept out. We must hold on to the word of God, to our prayers and scripture study and our covenants and our obedience, that tightly, tightly enough to repel every effort of Lucifer to break through and interrupt our joy.

“And it came to pass that when they were buried in the deep there was no water that could hurt them, their vessels being tight like unto a dish, and also they were tight like unto the ark of Noah; therefore when they were encompassed about by many waters they did cry unto the Lord, and he did bring them forth again upon the top of the waters” (Ether 6:7).

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