

Finally, for those blessed with the oneness, wholeness, and sense of completion that comes from becoming one flesh with the love of your life—please relish in the joy of knowing that you are truly blessed by the Almighty! **Never take your spouse for granted.** Recognize that you are indeed living examples of the intimacy that the Messiah Yeshua desires with the *ekklēsia*. Seek Him, and pray together for what He has brought you two together to accomplish for His Kingdom. The two of you have a great responsibility to be available for His service! Truly desire to enjoy the companionship of one another, and the life that He has given you on this Earth.

Reflection for *Noach* “The Days of Noah”

Matthew 24:37-42

Luke 17:26-27

1 Peter 3:18-22

2 Peter 2:4-5

Hebrews 11:7

As one moves from *Bereisheet* (Genesis 1:1-6:8) to *Noach* (Genesis 6:9-11:32), there is a passage of the text that bridges these two readings. It contrasts the differences between the degeneration of humanity, and the blameless righteousness of Noah, the man who walked with God. While the gross sinful actions of people provoke God to the point of having to exterminate the human race, there was one man who did find favor with Him. The human race would survive, in spite of the horrific consequences of the devastating Flood:

“Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. Then the LORD said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore *children* to them. Those were the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown. **Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.** The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.’ But Noah

found favor in the eyes of the LORD. These are *the records of* the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God. Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. Then God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth’” (Genesis 6:1-13).

The narrative of Genesis chs. 1-11 depicts how humanity falls headlong into depravity. Although the absolute meanings of “sons of God” and Nephilim are debated—suffice it to say the lust of the flesh began to prevail in sexual relationships. Whether men were having multiple wives, simply taking women off sexually because of their beauty, or whether angelic beings were actually interbreeding with humans—the fact remains that from God’s perspective, “every plan devised by [humanity’s] mind was nothing but evil all the time” (Genesis 6:5, NJPS). This total debauchery and wickedness grieved God’s heart to the point of needing to start over. Thankfully, upon surveying humanity, God’s eyes fell upon the one man who had not succumbed to the wickedness. As a result, the grace of God was able to be displayed toward one family, and through the progeny of Noah, his sons, and their wives the human race was not totally eliminated.

Naturally, the story of the Flood and its aftermath, as we read in the Holy Scriptures, was also distorted into mythological stories by other ancient cultures down through the ages. Different civilizations have altered elements of the account, as perhaps best seen in tales like Atrahasis or the Epic of Gilgamesh.¹ Nevertheless, for those who hold to a firm belief in the veracity and authority of the Holy Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16-17), the fact that Messiah Yeshua, the Apostle Peter, and the author of Hebrews mentioned Noah—reaffirm that Noah and the Flood are a critical part of human history (references further offered). The recorded details are much more than simply an historical meteorological event that affected the world, but rather an account of how the Creator God judges people because of their abhorrent transgressions. These figures of the Apostolic Scriptures all treated the Flood and Noah as real events—not as some repackaged mythology—**and so should we!**²

Living in more modern times, we should note the rapidly decreasing level of morality—as humanity at large heads once again toward total depravity. The words of Yeshua which instruct us about this are especially alarming. In His Olivet Discourse, Yeshua said that His Second Coming will occur at a time that is similar

¹ Consult the article “Encountering Mythology: A Case Study from the Flood Narratives” by J.K. McKee, for a further examination (appearing in *Confronting Critical Issues*).

² For further examination, consult the relevant sections of Hugh Ross, *The Genesis Question: Scientific Advances and the Accuracy of Genesis*, second expanded edition (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001).

to the “days of Noah.” When people will be engrossed by their great evil, and when the cavorting in eating and drinking and marrying without any concern for righteousness is rampant, the Messiah will then return. He may even come without the great majority of humanity even realizing that He is coming to judge the Earth:

“For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women *will be* grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left. Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming” (Matthew 24:37-42).

“And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:26-27).

The fact that Messiah Yeshua used the account of Noah to make some important points to His Disciples is an indicator that He treated him as an actual historical person. If the Genesis 6-9 Flood were not a real event, then I do not believe that the Messiah would have mislead us in using it as a point of reference for teaching. The Flood gives Bible readers the first theology of judgment seen in the Scriptures, and very much is a foreshadowing of the greater judgment that will come at the time of His return.

The Apostle Peter too alluded to the Genesis 6-9 Flood, in describing not only God’s patience, but also the redemptive work of the Lord via His sacrifice:

“For Messiah also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water. Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you³—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him” (1 Peter 3:18-22).

In his second epistle, Peter launched into a timely explanation about the insidious nature of false teachers and false prophets, inserting a comment about God’s ability and desire to preserve those who seek righteousness. The Flood was used, among several examples, as a means by which He judged the ungodly. Since

³ Editor’s note: This most probably has to do with the declaration of faith made at one’s immersion that Yeshua is Lord (Romans 10:9).

passages like this are quite instructional—given how today the proliferation of false teaching (and/or worldly philosophy) will inevitably lead us back to a time like the “days of Noah”—the entire passage is appropriate to consider. Note that many of the elements Peter described are noticeable, as one surveys the religious world today. For that same matter, what he detailed might compose various known descriptions of the kind of depravity which existed in the time prior to the Flood:

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; **and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;** and *if* He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing *them* to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly *lives* thereafter; and *if* He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day by *their* lawless deeds), **then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,** and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord. But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, *for* a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet. These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. For speaking out arrogant *words* of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Yeshua the Messiah, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state

has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, 'A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT' [Proverbs 26:11], and, 'A sow, after washing, *returns* to wallowing in the mire'"(2 Peter 2:1-22).

What is most critical for modern-day Believers to consider here, especially when it comes to contemplating your own personal pursuit of faithful righteousness, **is the possibility of falling away from the faith by being deceived by any false teachers, prophets, or evil people.** Peter stated without reservation that it would be better for anyone *not to have known* the way of righteousness, than to turn away from the salvation that God has provided.

As you consider the story of Noah and the Flood this week, recognize how there is a time coming when the world will very much return to the depravity reminiscent of Noah's generation. Just as God used the Flood to judge sinful humanity, His righteousness requires Him to execute an even greater judgment on a modern world that will, sadly and most lamentably, largely refuse to repent.

Yeshua's First Coming was to save the world:

"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (John 3:17).

There is a time coming when the world will be judged by the returning Messiah. As Paul elucidated to the Athenians:

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

It is incumbent upon everyone of us to be heirs to righteousness—just like Noah—and possess the faith to endure whatever difficult times we may face in the future, rejecting the temptations of sin. As the author of Hebrews observed,

"By faith Noah, being warned *by God* about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

If those living in ancient times did not have an excuse for their lack of faith and commensurate righteousness, then what about those of us living today—with all of the available Biblical resources outlining how to appropriate saving faith? Certainly, for those seeking righteousness, the current world scene seems to be on the verge of becoming like the days of Noah. But as hard as it is to believe, **things can and probably will become much worse.**

It is not our job to try and determine the exact time that such future days of Noah may manifest themselves, fear mongering and focusing on things that are completely out of our control. Instead, we should possess the faith of people like

Noah, Peter, and Paul. We should be examples to our generation of spiritually transformed people who are wholeheartedly seeking righteousness, by allowing the Holy One of Israel to accomplish His works through us. Of course, to do this, we must willingly choose Him and work together as a living sacrifice to the Almighty (Romans 12:12). Such obedience to the Lord might require some of us to do things that are not consistent with what the prophesied “Noah like days” will view as “normal.” Yet our infinite God has a multitude of ways that He uses His vessels to accomplish His will. In the case of Noah, it was to build an ark. Messiah Yeshua became the Sacrificial Lamb to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29), and no one need be consumed by the future flood of His judgment!

What about you? *The days of Noah will get here sooner or later.* What has our Creator created you to accomplish for Him? If you do not know what you have been created for, then ask Him! You just might get an answer...

Reflection for *Lekh-Lekha* “Faith Righteousness and Circumcision Status”

Acts 7:1-8

Romans 3:19-5:6

Galatians 3:15-18; 5:1-6

Colossians 2:11-15

Hebrews 7:1-19, 11:8-12

By the time many people reach *Lekh-Lekha* (Genesis 12:1-17:27), there is a natural tendency to focus on how the blessings bestowed upon those who bless Abraham, and by extension the Jewish people, affect us today. Genesis 12:1-3 are verses commonly quoted by Christians who encourage support for the Jewish people and the State of Israel, and how God will show favor to those who help His chosen people:

“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed’ (Genesis 12:1-3).