

God's Instruction to Noah

Genesis 6:13-22

Genesis 6:13-22 - *"And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. ¹⁵ And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. ¹⁶ You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.*

¹⁷ And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸ But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. ²⁰ Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. ²¹ And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them." ²² Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did."

Background Notes

If you were to visit our home, one of the first things you'd see is a large and beautiful model of Noah's Ark that was made by one of my Bible college students. It was built to N gauge scale, and I placed some N gauge railroad boxcars next to it for relative size. Even in tiny N gauge, the model of the ark is about three feet long, and the railroad boxcars are about two and a half inches long. So – **the real ark was really big!**

The ark was about 450 feet long. That's the length of 1 ½ football fields! It was 75 feet wide and 45 feet high – that's as high as a four-story building! It had three decks and many areas for the different animals. The ark was a big floating container. It looked more like a barge than a ship – but remember, sailing was not the purpose of the ark. The purpose of the ark was to **float** - and to be as stable as possible in the turbulent waters of the great Flood.

The ark was certainly large enough to carry all the animals (in spite of what the skeptics say). In volume it was equivalent to **several hundred** railroad boxcars - and that is **big!** How many of you have ever been in a railroad boxcar? They are large, and they hold a lot! In my college days I had a summer job with a fence company, and some days I had to unload fence posts from a railroad boxcar. It was an all-day job - if not more!

A few other things should be kept in mind:

a. Noah did not have to take two of every single variety of animal on board with him. Notice that Genesis 6:20 says “**after their kind**”: “*Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive.*” So maybe only a few pairs of dogs had to be taken on the ark – certainly not two of every genetic variety of the dogs we have today.

b. Probably many animals were taken on the ark as babies. Noah did not have to take the adults of the largest animals. In fact, younger animals would better serve the purpose of repopulation later. Yes, Noah took dinosaurs on the ark with him - probably baby dinosaurs. However, dinosaurs became extinct soon after the Flood (not 120 million years ago!)! The dinosaur fossils that are found in the fossil record today are the remains of dinosaurs that died out during the Flood.

Speaking of fossils - how does a fossil form? A dinosaur dying out in an open field wouldn't fossilize. No animal fossilizes that way! If it is to become a fossil, an animal **must** be rapidly buried by flood sediments. Rapidly burying an animal the size of an elephant or a dinosaur in sediments requires a **big flood!** The fossil record around the world is an **overwhelming** testimony to the **worldwide Flood, recorded in the Bible.**

c. It's likely that many of the animals hibernated on board the ark during the Flood. After all, there would have been drastic climatic changes with a worldwide flood. If many of the animals hibernated, particularly the large ones, Noah would not have had to accumulate as large a food supply. (In addition, hibernation would have helped to lessen the animal waste.)

d. In verse 20, God said that “.... *two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive.*” So Noah did not have to traipse all over the world, catching animals in pens and traps. No! God brought the animals to Noah. What about all the insects? No problem! God brought them. How many insects do you think went into the ark on the back of one elephant?

So all the questions of the unbelieving skeptics and critics of the Bible can be answered, and maybe you can share some of these answers with your skeptical friends and neighbors.

What was gopherwood? Why did Noah have to put tar on both the inside and the outside of the ark? Gopherwood was probably cedar or cypress wood, and the pitch inside and outside was probably done to thoroughly impregnate the wood, to make the ark as watertight as possible. And the pitch inside might have helped to overcome the animal odors. (Something to think about!) It would also act as a preservative for the wood as well. After all, it took 120 years to build the ark! In addition, the pitch would have kept the wood from rotting from animal waste products during the year of the Flood.

There was one window for airflow, probably a protected 18-inch gap that ran the length of the ark right below the roofline. And there was only one door. God closed the door when Noah and his family and all the animals were safely inside.

Doctrinal Points

1. God always judges the way of sin.

Verse 13: *“And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”*

What a contrast to Genesis 1:31, at the end of the creation account: *“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”* Why the change from Genesis 1:31 to Genesis 6? Answer: God created mankind with a free will - and man chose to disobey, turn away from God and sin against God.

Now God must judge man’s sin. God always judges the way of sin. He **has** to judge sin, because He created a moral universe. God cannot sweep sin under the rug. He can’t pretend sin didn’t happen. God must judge sin.

Is it possible that you are not a Christian, and you think that you can get away with your sin? You think that somehow God doesn’t know about your sin, or God is so “loving” that He will just overlook your sin? No way! As God judged sin in Noah’s day in no uncertain terms, so God must judge sin today. It is only a matter of time. God’s patience won’t last forever. God always judges sin. But now comes the good news!

2. God always provides a way of salvation.

Although God must always judge the way of sin, God always provides a way of salvation. God said to Noah, *“But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you” (v18).*

Did you know that this is the first mention of the word **“covenant”** in the Bible? God’s first covenant involved the salvation of Noah and his family! God always provides a way of salvation when He judges sin.

The ark is a wonderful picture of God’s way of eternal salvation for mankind. It’s a spiritual picture of Jesus Christ, God’s only way of salvation from the sure judgment of sin. As the ark took the flood of God’s judgment and rode out the storm, so Christ took the flood of God’s judgment against sin when He died on the Cross. Jesus Christ “rode out the storm” of God’s judgment and finished the work to save us from sin. As Noah and his family were safe from the judgment because they were in the ark, so we who have trusted Christ are safe from the storm of God’s judgment against sin. We are safe in Christ!

Do you see the beautiful picture of salvation? God cannot overlook sin, but He can forgive sin because the Lord Jesus paid the penalty for sin on the Cross. God took the judgment upon Himself. Now salvation is provided for anyone who will believe and trust Christ. God always provides a way of salvation!

Practical Application

Do we practice full obedience?

Verse 22 says, “*Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.*” Do you think it was easy for Noah to do all that God commanded him to do? Try building a boat the size of the ark - with very little help. Try convincing people, including your own relatives, that there is going to be a worldwide flood - when it hasn't even rained yet! Try preaching for 120 years with no converts - only skepticism and ridicule.

Even though it certainly wasn't easy, Noah obeyed God. He did **all** that God commanded him to do. God could have made it easier for Noah, but He purposely allowed Noah to go through a difficult test of faith - and Noah passed the test! He did all that God commanded him to do.

What about us? Do we practice full obedience, or do we cop out and only obey partially - or outright disobey - when the going gets tough? For example, what about our consistency as parents? Are we modeling an obedient Christian lifestyle in a corrupt world? Are we teaching our children about the Lord? Do we have family devotional times - even though it's often difficult to find the time?

Are we fully obedient here? Noah was! Noah's three sons were taught well in the midst of that corrupt world. They became believers, and evidently they married women who believed. The sons helped Noah build the ark. Most likely Noah's family is the source of the testimony in Genesis 6:9: “*Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.*” Parents, will your children be able to truthfully give you that testimony in days to come? God blessed Noah for his full obedience. Do we practice full obedience?