

The Ark of Salvation

Text: Gen. 6:14-22

Introduction:

1. In our last message we considered the description of Noah's walk with God and the condition of the world in which He lived. We now come to the details of the ark itself.
2. In this message we will consider the enormous size of the ark and how that it had more than sufficient capacity for Noah's family and the animals. We will also see how the ark is a wonderful picture of salvation.
3. We have divided the account into three sections for our study:

I. NOAH'S WALK WITH GOD (VS. 8-10)

We considered four facets of Noah's godly walk:

- A. The Start of His Walk (Vs. 8)**
- B. The Sanctification of His Walk (Vs. 8)**
- C. The Specifics of His Walk (Vs. 9a)**
- D. The Secret of His Walk (Vs. 9b)**

II. NOAH'S WORLD BEFORE GOD (VS. 11-13)

The wickedness of pre-flood world is documented in these verses and God's pronouncement against it. It provides a sharp contrast to the description of the godly life of Noah and also forms a natural basis for God's instructions to Noah concerning the ark.

A. The Depravity of Noah's World (Vs. 11-12)

The world of Noah's day was:

1. A Corrupt World – 'corrupt'.
2. A Cruel World – 'violence'.

B. The Decree for Noah's World (Vs. 13, 17)

III. NOAH'S WORK FOR GOD (VS. 14-22)

God now gives Noah detailed instructions concerning the building of the ark.

A. The Plan of the Ark (Vs. 14-15)

1. The Master Planner of the ark (Vs. 13). "And God said" – in a sense this was not Noah's ark, it was God's ark. God designed it and revealed it to Noah as the instrument whereby he would be spared the coming flood waters. The ark is a testament to the wisdom of God in every way. God designed the way of escape, the way of salvation from the coming judgment. In like manner, the Gospel reflects the manifold wisdom of God. No manmade method will save. It is God's way of salvation alone!
2. The Meaning of the Ark (Vs. 14a). The word would later be used to describe the much smaller vessel in which Moses' mother placed him when he was a baby (Ex. 2:3-5). The word 'ark' appears to be

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derived from an Egyptian word meaning “box” or “chest”. Moses, as author of the Pentateuch would have been fluent in Egyptian.¹

3. The Materials for the ark (Vs. 14b)
 - a. The wood – Gopher wood. The word ‘Gopher’ is a transliteration rather of the Hebrew word as it is the only occurrence of the word in the Bible. Its identity is unknown but we can be sure it was the right kind for the job! It was likely a dense hard wood of some kind. For centuries ships were built of wood. Steel has only been used in the last couple of centuries for the construction of ships.
 - b. The sealant – pitch. This was a form of tar to make the ark water tight. Recent experiments also indicate that the resinous coating would also provide very strong impact resistance.² It was likely made from a resinous substance of some kind rather than a bituminous material. The pitch was to be applied both within and without the ark.
 - i. “Critics often attack the Genesis account on this point. They claim that this is modern pitch made from petroleum...But a more likely explanation is that pitch need not be made from petroleum at all. For centuries, the pitch making industries in Europe made pitch from pine resin mixed with charcoal.” This is documented by Encyclopedia Britannica.³
 - ii. Interestingly, this same Hebrew word is frequently translated ‘atonement’ in the Old Testament. The word means “a covering”. So Noah was to “atone” the ark inside and out. This would provide a barrier of protection between the waters of judgment and Noah’s family inside the ark. “Just as the tar covered the ark and kept the inhabitants of the ark safe through the flood of Divine judgment, so the blood keeps the soul safe from the judgment of God on sin.”⁴
4. The Measurements for the ark (Vs. 15). The ark was an ocean-liner-sized vessel, not the cartoon ark shown in so many children’s books and illustrations. It is important to note that ark was “designed for capacity and floating stability rather than for speed or navigability.”⁵
 - a. Definition of a cubit. The Biblical cubit is approx...18 inches (45.7cm). It is the typical length between the elbow and the fingertips. The ark was to be 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high.
 - b. This means the ark would have been around 138m (L) x 23m (W) x 14m (H). In terms of Feet, that would be 450ft x 75ft x 45ft. This would result in a volume of about 44,400 m³.⁶ To put that in

¹ Sarfati, p. 495.

² Sarfati, p. 499.

³ Ibid, pp. 498-499.

⁴ Butler, p. 47.

⁵ H Morris, *The Genesis Record*, p. 181.

⁶ J Safarti, *The Genesis Account*, pp. 499-500.

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perspective, that would be equivalent to the capacity of over 340 semi-trailers. The Ark would be wider than a six-lane U.S. interstate highway.

- c. The ark's carrying capacity. According to Henry Morris, "the volumetric capacity of the Ark is equal to the volumetric capacity of 522 standard livestock cars such as used on modern American railroads. Since it is known that about 240 sheep can be transported in one stock car, a total of over 125,000 sheep could have been carried in the Ark."⁷ We will consider the question of how all the animals could fit on the ark in greater detail below.
- d. The ark's seaworthiness (floating stability). The ark's size and shape made it ideal for a floating vessel. "Ship builders have discovered that the best dimensions for a floating vessel are a length ten times its height and six times its width – the exact proportions of the ark."⁸ In fact, a study was conducted by a group of Korean naval architects in 1994 and they confirmed "that a barge with the Ark's dimensions would have optimal stability. They concluded that if the wood were only 30cm (1 foot) thick, it could have navigated sea conditions with waves higher than 30m (100 feet). Compare this with a tsunami ("tidal wave"), which is typically only about 10m high."⁹

B. The Particulars of the Ark (Vs. 14b, 16)

1. Its rooms (Vs. 14b). The word refers to a chamber. The word is also translated elsewhere in the Old Testament as 'nest'. These chambers would be for Noah and his family and for the many animals that would also be on the ark.
2. Its window (Vs. 16a). Appears from the construction of the text that this opening was right along the length of the ark. Henry Morris writes, "Although the phraseology is difficult, most authorities understand that this "window" was to consist of a one-cubit opening extending all around the Ark's circumference, near the roof, as provision for light and ventilation."¹⁰ This would make sense from the perspective of the need for both ventilation and lighting. Imagine how unbearable it would be with stale air and stench from all those animals if there was no window!
3. Its door (Vs. 16b). The door was to be made in the ark's side. There was only one door into the ark! In like manner, Christ is the only door to salvation from sin. Jesus said, "**I am the door**: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (John 10:9) See also John 14:6 & Acts 4:12. In fact, the ark is an amazing type of Christ. This mighty vessel was the design of God and not man. Its three decks remind us of the nature of the Triune God. Its one door reminds us of Christ (Jn. 10:9). Its timbers sealed with pitch (Heb. Atonement) speaks of the blood of Christ

⁷ Morris, p. 181.

⁸ Butler, p. 47.

⁹ Safarti, p. 503. See also official article @ <https://creation.com/safety-investigation-of-noahs-ark-in-a-seaway>, Viewed 18/2/22.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 182.

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covering the sinner and sealing out the waters of judgment. This vessel was a refuge for sinners against the great day of God's wrath. When God said, "Come", sinners were not only invited into safety but into fellowship, for God was pleased to tabernacle within the ark. The sinner entered by grace, but upon entering was immediately engaged in service in the good ship "Grace". So the believer is saved by grace and then joyfully enlisted in the service of the King.

4. Its decks (Vs. 16c). The ark would have three levels. This would maximize the efficient use of the space within the ark. In fact, the deck area of the Ark could fit 22 basketball courts.¹¹

C. The Passengers for the Ark (Vs. 17-20)

1. The human life that would be saved (Vs. 17-18).
 - a. God would make a covenant with Noah. This is the first occurrence of the word 'covenant' in the Bible and would be the first of a series of covenants God would make throughout Biblical history. The details of the Noachic covenant are given after the flood in Genesis 9:9-17. In this covenant, God promised that he would never again destroy the world with a flood and placed the rainbow in the sky as a token of that covenant. By the way, the rainbow should remind us that we have a merciful, gracious and covenant keeping God rather than making us think of a certain lobby group that advocates for sexual perversion.
 - b. God would preserve Noah and his family. They would all be spared the judgment of the world-wide flood. God in His foreknowledge knew that they would be the only ones saved from that generation.
 - c. "That only eight souls were saved in the ark is an encouragement to those who have labored diligently and faithfully in God's service but see very few results... So many judge the success of Christian service on the basis of numbers; so if one is not getting numbers, he is often tempted to resort to fleshly means to obtain them in order to demonstrate success in the work. We have many today who are criticizing and rejecting God's method of preaching and praying in favor of worldly methods to fill the church building. We are told to adapt to the culture. Thankfully Noah did not adapt to the culture. The culture was the reason for the flood. Why do you want to adapt to that which condemns us? Some churches have indeed obtained big crowds by rejecting Biblical methods and using worldly methods – methods that adapt to our culture. Dip your colors and the devil will have many running into your church. But this will be at the cost of a faithful message and holy standards."¹²
2. The animal life that would be spared (Vs. 19-20). Animals are created with instinctive abilities to discern storms, often long before humans. This may be what God used to bring them to the ark.

¹¹ Safarti, p. 500.

¹² Butler, pp. 56-57.

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- a. The instructions about numbers (Vs. 19a). Two of every kind generally and seven of every clean beast and bird specifically (Gen. 7:2-3). The extra numbers of clean animals were clearly a provision for sacrifices (See Gen. 8:20).
- b. The instructions about genders (Vs. 19b). The numbers were to be divided equally between male and female, clearly for the purpose of breeding after the flood to replenish the earth with animal life.
- c. The instructions about kinds (Vs. 20)
 - i. Fowls after their kind (bird life). The raven and dove are mentioned specifically later in the flood account.
 - ii. Cattle after their kind (land animals). A broad word meaning 'beasts'. Not the narrower definition we limit the word to today.
 - iii. Every creeping thing of the earth after his kind.
 - iv. Note: Remember, the Biblical kind was a broader category than the man-made classification system of species. Noah would not have needed to take two of every variety of dog for example. All he would need to do was to take two wolf-like creatures on the ark.
- d. Question: How did Noah fit all the animals on the ark? The short answer is "easily!" But lets back that up with some pointers.
 - i. Remember, as discussed earlier, the Ark could have held approx. 340 semi-trailers each of which could hold 300 sheep. So, it could hold 102,000 sheep.¹³ If they were only one layer deep on all three decks, 19,000 sheep could fit on the Ark, with enough area to satisfy UK animal welfare regulations. Based on the Biblical category of the kind as opposed to the man-made classification system of species, only around 2,000 animals would have been passengers on the ark.¹⁴
 - ii. For example, "of the 9,000 bird species, approximately 400 are hummingbirds, with only minor differences in color, size and habitat."¹⁵
 - iii. Scientist and author John Woodmorappe wrote a book in 1996 entitled *Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study* which deals with the attacks of the critics against the ark account. To be generous to the critics, he bases the calculation on the man-made category 'genus'. Based on that classification you have about 16,000 individual animals. Woodmorappe shows from standard recommended floor space requirements for animals that all of them together would have needed less than half the available floor space of the Ark's three decks.¹⁶
- e. Question: What about the size of the animals?

¹³ Henry Morris suggests as many as 125,000 sheep in his classic book "The Genesis Record".

¹⁴ Sarfarti, p. 516.

¹⁵ Institute of Creation Research, <https://www.icr.org/article/how-could-all-animals-get-board-noahs-ark>, Viewed 24/2/22.

¹⁶ Cited by Sarfarti, pp. 516-517.

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- i. We have discussed how many sheep-sized animals could fit on the ark. But “most vertebrate animals are smaller than sheep (e.g., most of the rodents, shrews, rabbits, birds, and lizards). The median size of all animals on the ark would actually have been that of a small rat, according to Woodmorappe’s tabulations, while only about 11% would have been much larger than a sheep.”
- ii. Regarding dinosaurs, there is no reason to assume that Noah took the largest, adult-sized ones. It is entirely reasonable to assume he took juvenile ones. It is important to remember that even the largest dinosaurs were once small. “They hatched from eggs, the largest of which was not much bigger than a football.”¹⁷

D. The Provisions for the Ark (Vs. 21)

This verse contains instructions concerning food stores for the passengers on the ark.

1. Food for Noah and his family.
2. Food for the animals.
3. On the space this would require, “Woodmorappe calculated that the volume of required foodstuffs would have been only about 15% of the Ark’s total volume. Drinking water would only have taken up about 9% of the volume. This volume would be reduced further if rainwater was collected and piped through troughs.”¹⁸
4. Note: This would constitute a significant task for Noah and his family in addition to the huge job of building the ark. Noah must have had a servant’s heart and attitude to work and labor for His God.

E. The Performance in relation to the Ark (Vs. 22)

1. This section ends with another positive statement about Noah. He was obedient to “all that God commanded him.” What a testimony! His faith was an obedient faith. His walk was an obedient walk.
2. Noah’s obedience to God is also mentioned in Gen. 7:5, 9 & 16.
3. Faith is acting upon God’s Word in obedience. Noah had never seen rain or a flood before. He had to walk by faith rather than sight and trust himself entirely and completely to God’s Word.

Conclusion:

1. Have you entered the ark of salvation? Are you sheltering under his atoning blood? Will you come to Christ today and escape the coming wrath and judgment of God?
2. How important is it to you to walk with God as a Christian? Are you surrendered to obeying God fully in your life? Is consecration to Christ and all His ways important to you?

¹⁷ Sarfati, p. 517.

¹⁸ Cited by Sarfati, p. 521.