

Genesis 6:11-22

*A Faith That Obeys God*

In 1935 a story appeared in Life Digest, an Australian publication, in which a Russian Aviator named Vladimir Roskovitsky claimed to have discovered Noah's ark.

He had been stationed in a temporary military outpost in southern Russia, just across the border from Turkey near Mount Ararat and had been told to test one of the Russian air force planes.

In the course of these tests he and his co-pilot flew over Ararat and discovered something on the edge of a retreating glacier. He later described this as a boat comparable in size to many modern battleships. He wrote:

"It was grounded on the shore of a lake with about  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the rear end still running out into the water, and its extreme rear was  $\frac{1}{2}$  under water. It had been partly dismantled on one side near the front, and on the other side there was a great doorway nearly 20 feet square, but with the door gone."

Roskovitsky reported his find to his commanding officer, and an expedition was dispatched to Ararat which, according to the story, subsequently found the ark and photographed it. Accounts were forwarded to the Czar but just a short time later the Czar was overthrown and the photographs and reports were lost.

Is there really the remains of the ark resting on Mt. Ararat? Was Noah a historical figure who actually built a giant ship that weathered the greatest storm that ever hit the earth?

To many people, including some who call themselves Christians, the thought of a universal flood and an old man floating across it with a boat load of animals is nothing but a fairy tale.

And yet as we read Genesis chapters 6 through 9 we find that that is exactly what is claimed by the Scriptures.

We are told in Genesis that Noah took two of every animal with him, along with 7 of the birds and clean animals, that the waters of the flood covered the earth to the tops of the mountains, and the entire population of the planet including people and animals was wiped out.

If language has any meaning at all, it is clear that Genesis is teaching a literal universal flood, and a literal ark.

We're in a study of Genesis but before we look back at chapter 6 again I want us to see first of all:

### *I. Worldwide Flood Stories Point To An Actual Flood*

Now some people would reject the biblical record as totally false.

They would argue that since there are other flood traditions in other cultures that Genesis just is another example of man's imagination.

Around 1845 British archeologists excavating the city of Nineveh (which is in Iraq today), found 31,000 clay tablets. They were all part of the library of an Assyrian king named Ashurbanipal. You can see many of them today in the British Museum in London.

They brought them back to England and began to catalog and translate them and in those records was the Gilgamesh epic, a flood account very similar to that of Genesis. Bible critics jumped with glee saying that whoever wrote Genesis probably just copied an ancient myth and added his own ideas.

The importance of what was found in Nineveh was that it was just one more example of what is found in literally hundreds of cultures across the globe, every continent has its flood traditions - north, south, Central America, the middle east, Africa, Europe, Asia, the far east.

Henry Morris and Tim LaHaye co-authored a book called "The Ark on Ararat" in which they list 214 people's and cultures which have flood stories.

These flood traditions vary, but there are central themes of a special family, a boat, animals, and man's wickedness. Many even include birds, a rainbow, and 8 people specifically saved.

LaHaye and Morris conclude, "The universal flood tradition can only have come from a common source, embellished with local color and culture, but retaining enough pertinent data to convey both historical and moral concepts."

Hugh Miller, a careful investigator of these stories in the 1800's wrote, "The destruction of well nigh the whole human race in an early age of the world's history by

a great deluge appears to have so impressed the minds of the few survivors and seems to have been handed down to their children, in consequence, with such terror struck impressiveness that their remote descendants of the present day have not yet forgotten it. It appears in almost every mythology and lives in the most distant countries and among the most barbarous tribes.”

There was a universal flood. And the multitudes of flood stories from all over the globe bear witness to that fact.

*I. Worldwide Flood Stories Point To An Actual Flood*

*II. Worldwide Geological Evidence Points To A n Actual Flood*

There are other evidences to the flood, the most obvious being the geological and fossil record.

We find seashells on the highest mountains. We have vast deposits of fossils all over the world that contain thousands of animals crunched together. Something cataclysmic caused those fossil beds. In Nebraska you can visit Ashfall Fossil Beds State Park.

It's estimated that the bones of about 9000 complete animals are buried in Ashfall.. The rock of Gibraltar has bone filled fissures in it that are 300 feet deep.

The coal beds and oil fields are all vegetable and animal matter laid down and compressed through the geological forces of the flood.

And then of course there's sedimentary rock that is found all over the world. God has left a mark for us. He's left a worldwide witness to Noah's flood.

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*II. Worldwide Geological Evidence Points To A n Actual Flood*

*III. Biblical Evidence Points To Am Actual Flood*

The most powerful witness for me personally has to be the Bible itself. If I can trust the Bible when it tells me that Jesus is God in the flesh and heaven in a gift then I can trust it in Genesis and Matthew and Luke and Hebrews and Peter where Noah and the flood are spoken of as historical fact.

Obviously the bottom line comes down to taking the Bible at face value and when you do you have a universal, cataclysmic flood.

## Open your Bibles to Genesis 6

In Genesis chapter 6 we find the reason why God brought the flood upon the earth. As we saw in our last study the earth was so filled with violence and wickedness and corruption that there was literally only a handful of godly individuals left.

God pronounced a judgment upon the ungodly world but one man, Noah, found grace in the eyes of God.

### Read verses 8 & 9

The New Testament book of Hebrews tells us that Noah was a man of faith. He wasn't sinless, but he was a believer in Jehovah God who was justified by faith. A man who walked before God and his fellow men in an upright moral way.

Well, God came to righteous Noah and said, **Read vs. 13 - 22**

Now look with me at **Hebrews 11, page 1069, read verse 7**

When God came to Noah and told him that he was ready to destroy the world because of its wickedness and instructed him to build an ark. He did it.

The word translated "fear" in verse 7 *eulabeomai* doesn't mean terror, or fright, but it means reverence. It literally means "to receive well."

God came to Noah and told him to do something so far out, so beyond the ordinary that we couldn't even imagine it, and out of reverence for God Noah obeyed.

Noah was warned of God of things not seen yet.

Noah probably lived in Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, a long way from any sizeable body of water.

As far as we know there hadn't been any environmental warnings that a flood was coming. Some commentators think that it's possible that it hadn't even rained up until this point because Genesis 2 says, *For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.* Genesis 2:5

Whatever the circumstances were, this idea of a flood was about the most unlikely thing you could come up with.

To most of us this would have been so strange, so demanding, so embarrassing, so absolutely overwhelming that we would have done anything to get out of it.

“God that’s way to big a job for me to handle. You really don’t want to something quite so drastic do you? Don’t you want people to like You? I do! If you just have to bring this flood on earth, maybe you can get someone else with more experience to take over.”

But Noah, who didn't have a New Testament and all the biblical knowledge that we have, didn't argue, didn't make excuses, or didn't question God.

Genesis 6:22 says very simply and succinctly, *Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.*

How do you respond when God speaks to you through His Word? Some times the things that God asks us to do don't make sense to us.

A couple are on the verge of divorce and can't stand one another and God says, *“Husbands love your wives.”*

Jesus said love your enemies. That doesn't make sense to the human brain. But God says do it anyway. By the way, love is an action of service.

A young person can't understand why her parents seem so strict and out of touch with life. She wants to do what she wants to do. But God says, *Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.*

Not just when you agree or when you understand why they tell you what they tell you. Just obey because it is the right thing to do.

That list could go on and on.

Noah obeyed. And he spent over 100 years carrying out this one command.

There's been a lot of faithful believers down through the centuries, but I think Noah stands head and shoulders above them all, if for nothing else than the sheer magnitude and time span of his one assignment from God.

I'm sure Noah had plenty to do without building the ark. He had to raise crops and take care of his family. To surrender the time and effort needed to build this boat took a special kind of commitment.

Noah had no idea what an ocean going ship was like. He'd never seen one, or even heard of one before.

He had no experience in shipbuilding, no easy access to building materials and no help except for his sons who weren't even born until after he had started.

One of the greatest tangible acts of faith in all history was Noah's cutting down the first gopher tree for wood to make the ark.

Now, some people would try to dismiss what the Bible says and label it as myth because they said it would just be an impossibility.

And one of the main reasons that it's supposed to be impossible is because of all the animals that would have had to have been crammed into the ark and then cared for for a whole year.

What I've found is that most people who try to laugh off the story of the ark actually have no idea what the size of the ark was. They ask, "How did God get all of those animals in the little bittie boat?"

Well, lets look at God's instructions for the building of this great ocean going vessel.

First of all it was to be made of gopher wood, which was probably cedar although we can't be absolutely positive.

Secondly, the dimensions were to be 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high.

There is no way of knowing the exact length of a cubit. The Babylonian cubit was about 20 inches long. The Egyptians had one a bit longer and the later Hebrews had one a little shorter.

Generally, it was about the length from the tip of a man's middle finger to his elbow. Most Bible scholars believe the biblical cubit to be about 18 inches.

It's on the basis of that assumption that the translators of the NIV came up with 450' long 75' wide and 45' high.

Several things are important about those measurements. First, remember the ark was like a big rectangular box. It was a barge built for stability, not a sailing vessel built for speed.

There have been simulated tests done in research labs to show that at these dimension the ark would have been very stable.

One study ran a model in a tank through what was the equivalent of 200 foot waves and it remained steady. It's tendency was to continuously nose into waves.

Dr. Henry Morris did some calculations and was able to show that the ark could be turned up to 90 degrees and it would still right itself.

In 1609 at Hoorn Holland, a Mennonite named Jansen built a model ship using the ark's ratio of dimensions as his guide. The standard length to width ratio for boats was 3 to 1. The ark was 6 to 1 so Jansen tried it. It turned out to be so seaworthy and unsinkable that Dutch ships called "fleuten" were patterned after it. So it's shape is significant.

Another important thing we learn from those measurements is that the ark was not only sea worthy, and remember the earth covered with water wasn't like a calm lake; enormous geological transformations were taking place, valleys sinking and mountains rising, the water was in turmoil.

But also we find that the ark was one big boat. There were 3 decks inside which gave a total available floor space of 95,000 square feet and a total volume of 1,400,000 cubic feet.

Now, these kinds of figures are hard to picture without a frame of reference so imagine waiting at a railroad crossing while a freight train with 520 boxcars, moves slowly by one after another. That's how much space was available in the ark.

Now what about the millions of animals that Noah suppose would have taken on the ark?

You'll notice that Noah was commanded to take two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground. Of the clean animals that could be offered for sacrifice they were taken by 7's.

In Genesis 1, we see that phrase *after it's kind* used for plants and animals. A kind is a dog, or a cat. Not every breed of dog or cat.

Those that are able to mate make up a “kind.”

Frank Lewis Marsh has a book called, *Evolution, Creation & Science*, in which he shows how diversified animals become that are rooted in common stock.

For instance, 500 varieties of sweet peas were developed from a common stock. Over 200 distinct varieties of dogs from collies to Chihuahua have developed from a very few wild dogs.

The domestic pigeon has a staggering amount of variations - pointer, leghorn runt, fantail, tumbler, the owl, the turbit, the swallow, the carrier, the homing.

They all have a different appearance and different temperament yet they all have been developed from the wild rock pigeon from Europe.

Noah didn't need 80 different dogs on board, just 2. And the same goes for the rest of the animals.

Assuming 35,000 different animals and a million different insects only half of the ark's volume would be used for animals.

Most of us think of large animals when we think of the ark, but most land animals are smaller than a sheep and those that could grow larger could have come on as babies.

Since 240 sheep fit comfortably in the average 2 dock railroad car and since the ark could handle 520 box cars, there would have been plenty of room for the animals, Noah and his family and all the food.

On top of all this we have to remember that this was a supernatural, miraculous event. God brought the animals on the ark and God is very capable of sustaining them.

He gave the Israelites bread from heaven, water from a rock and kept their shoes from wearing out for 40 years in the dessert.

Belive me, God could watch over the animals in the ark. Who knows, maybe God caused them to go into a state of hibernation.



What ever the case, there definitely was room in the ark, and then some.

As LaHay notes: "Such simple calculations about the size of the ark are certainly not beyond the abilities of the scoffers. What does seem beyond them is the willingness to try and see if the biblical story is feasible."

So here we find the testimony of this great big ark. Peter tells us that Noah was a "preacher of righteousness" and Hebrews tells us that by building the ark "he condemned the world."

God's grace always proceeds His judgment. Mankind deserved to be destroyed without a chance of survival but God gave the human race 120 more years.

And for 120 years Noah warned that judgment was coming. Every tree that was felled to construct that ark, every blow of Noah's hammer was a proclamation that God's judgment was coming.

And I can just imagine how the people must have scoffed at old Noah.

The bull's eye of Satan's attacks on the Bible is the truth of God's judgment. Satan wants to deny that God judges.

In the garden when Eve said, "We can't eat the fruit or we'll die."

Satan didn't question God's right to withhold the fruit. He didn't get Eve to doubt quality of the fruit.

He said, "You shall not surely die."

Satan was saying, "Don't worry Eve, God won't judge."

It was that way in the garden, it was that way in Noah's world, and it's that way today. The average person may fear a terrorist attack or an economic collapse, but they don't fear God.

They don't believe there was a flood, they don't believe that God reigned down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah, and they don't believe that there's going to be a judgment in the future.

As Peter put it they say, *Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell*

*asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. II Peter 3:4*

Can't you just see people going down to see crazy Noah who's building a giant boat to save everyone from a flood when it hasn't even rained.

But the flood was coming and they were all going to die just like all who reject Christ are going to suffer God's eternal judgment.

*I. Worldwide Flood Stories Point To An Actual Flood*

*II. Worldwide Geological Evidence Points To A n Actual Flood*

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*IV. Noah's Ark Points to Jesus Christ*

The ark of Noah is more than just a story of a man and a boat. It's a picture of Jesus Christ and God's salvation. Think about these areas in which the ark pictures Christ.

1. The ark was Gods' provision. Before the first drop of water fell God commanded the ark to be built. It wasn't that God said "I'm going to judge the world" and Noah ran off and said, "I'd better build an ark." God commanded Noah to build the ark.

The same is true of Jesus Christ. Christ as Savior wasn't an afterthought of God. He *was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world.*

The ark was God's provision for Noah, as Jesus Christ is God's provision for us.

2. God told Noah to build an ark of wood. Trees had to be cut down and die for Noah's salvation. This gives us a hint of Jesus' humanity. Isaiah calls him a root out of dry ground. Christ, the eternal Son of God, had to become the son of man and part of the dust of the earth so that he could be cut off and provide a refuge for us.

3. The ark was a refuge from divine judgment. There are 3 arks mentioned in the Bible and each of them was a shelter and a place of safety.

The ark of Genesis 6 was a shelter from God's wrath.

The ark of bulrushes hid baby Moses from Pharaoh's wrath. And the ark of the covenant sheltered the two tablets of stone which had the 10 commandments on them. Each ark speaks of Jesus and putting them all together we learn that believers are sheltered from God's wrath, satanic assaults, and the condemnation of the law.

Noah's ark was a place of safety. It was provided by God when death threatened all. It was the only place of deliverance from the wrath to come.

Jesus is our Savior. *Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.* Acts 4:12

4. God invited people to come into the ark. He said to Noah, *Go into the ark, you and your whole family.* Jesus says, *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Matthew 11:28

5. The ark was a place of absolute security. It was covered with pitch inside and out. No matter how hard it rained or what the storms were like, Noah and his family were safe in the ark.

The Bible says, *For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.* Colossians 3:3  
Nobody died on the ark. There was safety just like there is in Jesus Christ, no matter what the storms of life do.

6. It had only one door. That one just shouts out to us. Jesus said, *I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved.* John 10:9 *I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.* John 14:6

And then #7. The ark teaches the truth of atonement. Noah was told to coat the ark inside and outside with pitch. The Hebrew word is not the common one for pitch but it's *kaphar*. 70 times in the Old Testament it's translated as "atonement" or a covering for sin.

God is of purer eyes than to look upon sin.

He said, *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul.* Leviticus 17:11

Sin must be covered. There must be an atonement. Noah and his family were covered from the wrath of God just like we must be by the blood of Christ.

Will we ever find Noah's ark on Mt. Ararat in Turkey? Hundreds of reports say it's there. God's word tells us there was an ark and it rested on Ararat.

But whether anybody finds it there after thousands of years isn't really the most important thing. The Bible explains that *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Hebrews 11:1

We have to live by faith and not by sight if we want to see God's truth.

In the final analysis, the story of God's judgment on the world and Noah's ark isn't based on physical evidence, it is based on the Bible, which tells us the story of Noah.

That makes our faith essentially the same as his was. There was no physical evidence that a flood was coming, just God's word.

And Noah based his faith not on what his reason might have told him, or the taunts of his neighbors, but on his knowledge of God.

Do you have Noah's faith in God's word? These things are written for our instruction. We haven't been told to build an ark, but we have been instructed to place our faith in Christ who died for us.

God says "Come, the door of safety is open. Be saved from the wrath to come."

And finally, if you are saved let me ask you this. If you were in Noah's shoes would you have obeyed God and endured the rejection and scoffing of everyone around you?

Are there areas of your life that you need to bring in line with God's commands even though your logical mind, or your friends, or even your own family tells you otherwise? Then you need to obey God simply because He's commanded you to - because it's right!