

The P Source Flood

Genesis 6:9b-22; 7:8-9, 11, 13-16a, 21, 24; 8:1-2a, 3b-5, 7, 13a, 14-19; 9:1-17

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Noah was a virtuous man. He lived right and obeyed God. He had three sons – Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Now the earth had gone to ruin; humankind had corrupted it. God said to Noah, "Cruelty and violence have spread everywhere. I am going to send a flood to destroy the earth and every living creature on it. But I promise you and your family will be kept safe."

God told Noah to build an Ark – a great big boat! "Build it out of wood and coat it inside and out with tar. Make it four hundred fifty feet long, seventy-five feet wide, and forty-five feet high. Put a roof on the Ark and leave a space of about eighteen inches between the roof and the tops of the walls to let in light and air. There are to be lower, middle, and upper decks divided into rooms. Put a door in one side of the Ark.

"You and all your family are to go into the Ark. Take with you two of every kind of animal, a male and a female. Take birds and domestic animals and creepy-crawly things – two of every kind so these creatures will be kept alive on the earth. And store enough food on board to feed yourselves and the animals throughout your stay in the Ark."

Noah did just as God had commanded him.

God sent animals to Noah, lots of animals. Two of every kind – herd animals, crawling things, fowl, chirping things, birds – all of them came to Noah and went into the Ark just as God had commanded.

When Noah was six hundred years old, in the second month, on the seventeenth day, he and his wife, his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives went into the Ark along with all the animals that were to be spared.

Then all the water that was under the earth came gushing out everywhere. And it was as though windows had been opened in the sky and great torrents of rain came pouring down, and the water got deeper and deeper. No bird, no animal, no human was left alive anywhere on earth.

God did not forget about Noah and after the Ark had been afloat for about five months God caused a wind to blow and the floodwaters started to go down. As the waters slowly receded, the Ark came to rest somewhere in the Ararat Mountains. Two and a half months later, Noah could see the mountains had raised their heads above the surface of the water.

He sent out a raven. There was no place for it to land. So the raven just flew around here and there, returning to Ark again and again. When Noah was six hundred and one, on the first day of the year, he could see the ground was nearly dry. Still he waited.

All-in-all Noah and those with him were in the Ark for over a year before the ground was completely dry and God said, "Come out of the Ark." Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives came out of the Ark onto an earth that had been washed clean and was ready for a new beginning. The animals left the Ark in groups of their own kind and spread all over the earth.

God told Noah and his sons, "Generation upon generation will follow after you, and the earth will be repopulated. From now on the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the creatures of the land will be afraid of you. However, it will remain your responsibility to watch over them and care for them, although from now on you will be allowed to eat them, along with the fruits and vegetables you have always eaten. But remember life is in the blood, and you must not eat any meat that still has blood in it. Remember too I created humans to be like me. I will punish any animal or person for taking a human life."

Then God created a different kind of arc than the one Noah had built – a multi-colored arc spanning the sky. God said to Noah and his sons, "This rainbow I have put in the sky will be my sign to you and to every living creature. I promise the earth and those living on it will never again be completely wiped out by a flood. Whenever you see a rainbow, remember I will keep this promise forever."