

Noah: A New Start

As people became more numerous on the earth, their society became more and more wicked. At last, their evil was such a stench to God, He knew the inhabitants of the earth would never do any better unless some drastic steps were taken, and soon.

There remained, however, one man that pleased God; God decided that He would save his family--Noah, Noah's wife, Noah's sons, and their wives, but destroying the rest of all mankind with a gigantic flood. Then he could give a fresh start to His creation. God directed Noah in what He planned, and gave him very detailed instructions for constructing a large boat of gopher wood. Here, Noah and his family could keep some of all the earth's animals while the storm raged outside. Noah would be the person God would use to carry on a seed of all living things on the earth.

God told him that he was to preach to all with whom he came in contact, warning them of the coming flood and admonishing them to join him in the ark. It proved to be quite a task to explain how it would rain and flood, though, for it had never rained upon the earth. Since the first, the land had been watered by a mist. So no one believed Noah knew what he was talking about.

At last, after one hundred and twenty years of hard work by his family, the ark was complete. God called Noah now to

board the vessel with his family. He called two of all kinds of animals (a male and a female, and a few extra for food) into the huge vessel. It was not designed to travel anywhere, only to float with the valuable cargo inside. "It will rain for forty days and nights", God told Noah, "but waters will cover the earth for a longer time." Food for the animals was thought of, too, by the Creator. When Noah's family and all the creatures were inside and safe, God closed the door.

It was very still for a while, then drops of water began to fall. Noah had experienced a lot of fun-making by others during the time building was going on. By now, though, the people outside began to see how wrong they had been. They wanted to get into the ark with Noah, but God had shut the only door. After seven days, flood waters were over the earth; not only did it rain, but the caverns of the deep also opened. It rained hard for forty days and forty nights, and the earth was covered with water for months afterward. Noah, and his family were alone (except for God) on the waters that had devastated the earth. Even the tallest mountain peaks were submerged.

When the rain finally abated, the waters began to go back to its bounds, allowing the tops of the mountains to stand above the water. At last, the ark rested on the top of one of these, Mount Ararat, and the waters continued to go down. At God's instruction, birds told Noah when it was safe

to emerge with his family, who built an altar to worship God. When God saw that Noah was sincere in worship, He promised that there would never again be such a flood on the earth. To be a sign to mankind, He fashioned a beautiful rainbow which would always come when rain came for them to see as a sign of the agreement God made.

Noah shows the steadfastness of our God, and was quite steadfast himself. Imagine how it must have been a strange-looking sight for him to build a boat out in the middle of a plain, far from water! And think of the foolishness of the suggestion that it would rain enough to support the boat. But God had instructed Noah, and he did not waver. Noah's faith in God was immovable.

Noah lived to be nine hundred and fifty years old! Many of his descendants were already dead by then. He was one of the few that lived both in the old world, and in another, newer in some ways, better one. But when he went home to Heaven, he was in the best of all three.