

March 26, 2006 AM

**PREPARING FOR DISASTER
GENESIS 7:1-10**

1. INSTRUCTIONS AND OBEDIENCE (1-10)

A. YHWH'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRESERVATION (1-4)

YHWH said: Noah's faith is firmly grounded upon God's word. His life was shaped by what God revealed. This is faith.

Noah's federal headship (1): Noah was the representative through whom God would accomplish what he purposed. Noah was the appointed "seed" through whom the promise would come.

7:1 - God declares why Noah and his household will be saved from the waters of destruction: "because I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation."

Lawcourt language: YHWH *sees* that Noah is righteous. God sees and discerns, passing judgment upon a situation. "Before me" also carries the resonance of the law court.

This righteousness of Noah was not sinless perfection. His righteousness was his faithfulness to God's covenant, which included sacrifice for sin. Noah, after the ark comes to rest, offers up an animal sacrifice to God (8:20ff.), indicating at least that Noah recognized his own sinfulness before God and need of cleansing.

But it was within the gracious covenant that God had established with Noah that sacrifice could be made for sin and God would forgive the sins of his people. Noah was a faithful worshiper, faithful to the covenant and thus declared righteous by God.

This righteousness was a righteousness that was *seen* in Noah's life. Any attempt to make this righteousness some kind of invisible transaction at this point fails to do justice to the text. But righteousness always includes faith.

Because of Noah's faithfulness that his household and the whole world will be saved. This is a clear picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. Noah is a lesser Christ, and Christ is a greater Noah.

Clean and unclean animals (2-3): Distinction does not begin in Leviticus (obviously) or even Noah (it is assumed that he can distinguish between the clean and unclean animals). These distinctions go back to the beginning, at least to the time right after the expulsion from the garden.

The question is, Where do we learn about the distinction between clean and unclean animals? How could Noah (or for that matter Adam, Abel, etc.) known how to distinguish between clean and unclean animals? There is, of course, the possibility that God could have directly revealed this and it is not recorded for us. But is also possible that God's pronouncement of the curse upon the serpent and the ground in Genesis 3 could have provided the basis for the reasoning and consequent distinction between the clean and unclean animals.

General principle: When the serpent was cursed he was cursed by being made to crawl on his belly and eat the dust of the ground all of his days. All of those animals that relate to the ground like the serpent are unclean. "Direct" contact with the ground made an animal unclean.

The clean animals were all of those animals that were not unclean. Many of these animals could be sacrificed. We see in chap. 8 that Noah takes of the clean animals and sacrifices them. These animals could also be eaten (as is also evident after the flood).

The fact that God saved the animals literally has great importance. God cares for all of his creation. He will bring all of his created order into new creation. Human beings, while a top priority, are not God's only priority.

But the animals, as we learn later in Scripture explicitly, do have a function of pointing us to the differences and distinctions between persons, families and nations. In short, animals represent people. They symbolize people. E.g., Israel is to distinguish between clean and unclean animals because they are a distinct and separate family/nation from the rest of the families/nations/Gentiles.

But in the ark we get a glimpse of what God is going to do in the future. God is preserving the nations—the unclean Gentiles—because one day he will make them clean. The promise of God's blessing will extend to all the families of the earth, not just the one through whom the promise will come. Cf. Abrahamic promise (Gen 12:1-3) and Acts 10.

Seven pairs and one pair (2-3): “Seven seven” and “twos”; Seven is the number of completion.

There is also what some might call a “practical” reason for the number of clean animals being more than the number of unclean animals. The clean animals were the only ones that were able to be sacrificed and eaten.

This mandate of procreation for the animals is seen clearly in the fact that God says that he wants the animals delivered from the flood in order “to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth” (v. 3b). This “seed” language referring to animals is unusual unless you go back to the pronouncement by God to the serpent in which it was proclaimed that the serpent would have a “seed” as well as the woman. The overtones of that pronouncement are being heard here again.

Seven days: These seven days were the days in which the animals gathered at the ark, the food was collected and stored and final preparations were being made before entering the ark.

This pronouncement comes seven days before the flood begins. Therefore, the flood begins on the “seventh day.” This, especially coupled with Noah’s purpose (remember: he is going to bring “rest”), all points to the fact that this is “the day of the Lord.”

The day of the Lord, or the Lord’s Day, is a “sabbath.” It is a time in which God comes to speak, judge, punish and reward. The Day of the Lord is a day of life and death.

40 days and 40 nights: Throughout the Scriptures the period characterized by 40 units of time—i.e., whether days or years—is quite common. This particular span of time seems to point to some sort of time of “suspension” in which there is judgment at the end of which is a new age of some sort.

“Forty” is an important figure throughout the history of God’s people. Moses is on the mountain for forty days receiving the law in which a “new age” will be ushered in (cf. Exod 24:18; 34:28; Deut 9:11, 18-25). But while he is doing so, the people are engaged in idolatry for which they will be judged (Exod 32). Stephen, in his sermon before the Council in Acts 7, divides Moses’ life into forty year periods (cf. Acts 7:23, 30, 36). Israel’s spies are sent into the Promised Land to spy it out for forty days. When they return and give their report, the people rebel against God and are sentenced to forty years in the wilderness in order to “wipe out” the rebellious generation (cf. Num 13:25; 14:33-34). This will end with the children of Israel entering into the new age, the Promised Land. Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness fasting (cf. Matt 4:1 ff.). This was a time of testing, the other side of which meant the defeat of the enemy and the bringing in of the kingdom of God.

Now, there are a couple of “forty day” periods in this story: one at the beginning and one at the end. Both of these are times in which “new ages,” in some sense, are entered into. The first one is bad. The second one is good.

The forty *days* and forty *nights* sequence, going back to the original creation gives us the clue as to how we are to see this. Originally, God made the sequence of the day to move from evening to morning; i.e., “and the evening and the morning were the such-and-such day.” Here we see the reverse. The movement is not from darkness to light but from light to darkness. This progress fits the pattern of events taking place in this first forty days. There is a movement from creation to de-creation.

“From the face of the ground”: The emphasis on that which God has created—“that I have made”—and the destruction of it—“I will blot out”—again point to the nature of what God is doing. He is de-constructing the earth.

B. NOAH’S RESPONSE OF OBEDIENCE (5-10)

Noah’s obedience is summarized (5): “And Noah did according unto all that YHWH had commanded him.” Cf. 6:22, 7:5, 9, 16.

Noah’s obedience particularized (6ff.)

The ark as a place of safety (7) The only safe place in the world was the ark. It might not have been the best looking place or even the best smelling place, but it sure did beat being outside the ark! This was the place that Noah and his family would be shielded from the wrath of God.

The animals come to Noah (9): Cp. with Adam in 2:19

The 7th Day (10): God does what he promised when he promised.

Application: (1) All families of the earth can be made clean in Christ.

Application: (2) Only in Christ can you be made clean.

Application: (3) There is still a clean/unclean distinction to be made by Christians.

Application: (4) God is saving the world through Christ.

