

The Lord Had Noah Wait for the Earth to Dry Up

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain that God showed His mighty power by preserving those who trust in Him and judging those who continued in their rebellion against Him. In this topic, we see that God began to dry up the waters of the flood so man could again live on the earth.

God preserved Noah and his family as they spent a little over a year on the ark. Genesis 8:1-3a says, “Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that *were* with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters receded continually from the earth.” We see that God remembered Noah, his family, and all of the creatures on the ark. The word translated “remembered” has three main meanings. One of those meanings means *to think about something so it causes a person to act*.

In these verses, we see that as God thought about Noah and those who were with him, He took action to cause the waters of the flood to begin to dry up. We see that God made a wind pass over the earth. This wind caused the water to begin to evaporate and return to the atmosphere above the earth. The next place where we see this word in the book of Genesis was when God spoke to Noah and his sons in Genesis 9:15-16 after he came off of the ark. God told them in those verses, ““And I will remember My covenant which *is* between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* on the earth.”” Here, God said that He would cause the rainbow to be in the cloud and remember His covenant and never again destroy all flesh with a flood. God also said He would cause the rainbow so He, and the people of the earth, could be reminded that God would never again destroy the earth with a flood.

God stopped the fountains of the deep and He stopped the rain from the heaven after forty days so that no more water was coming from either source until the floodwaters had dried up. From that point on, the waters began to go down throughout the earth, as we see in verse 3 that the waters receded continually from the earth. The fountains of the deep had opened and the rains had come down for a total of forty days. In the previous topic, we saw that the highest mountains were covered by at least twenty-two-and-a-half feet of water. Genesis 8:3b-5 says, “At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth *month*, on the first *day* of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.” The water receded for one hundred and ten days after the rain stopped, or a total of a hundred and fifty days since the rain began.

Genesis 7:11 tells us when the rain had started. That verse says, “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.” Here, in Genesis 8:4,

we see that the ark rested on the tops of the mountains of Ararat exactly one hundred and fifty days after the rain had started. The mountains of Ararat are more than seventeen thousand feet high, so the water still had a long way to recede before the level of the water would be back to the level that it was before the flood. (The mountain that some people feel is possibly Mount Ararat, where the ark rested, is covered by a permanent cap of snow, which is about three hundred and fifty feet deep based on satellite measurements.) In fact, it took almost another two-and-a-half months before the tops of all of the surrounding mountains could be seen.

The waters continued to drop as the winds blew and the water evaporated into the atmosphere. Finally, on the first day of the tenth month, it was possible to see the tops of the surrounding mountains. However, this meant the water still had a long way to recede before the valleys would be able to be seen. After the water finally receded from the mountains, the ground still had to become dry before Noah, his family, and all of the birds, animals, and creeping things could leave the ark.

As a result, Genesis 8:6-12 says, “So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf *was* in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore.” Here, we see that Noah waited another forty days after the tops of all of the mountains were seen.

Then, Noah sent out a raven. However, ravens can survive by eating many things. Leviticus 11:15 said that the raven was an unclean bird because of the things that it ate. Leviticus 11:13-15 says, ““And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they *are* an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, the kite, and the falcon after its kind; every raven after its kind.”” These birds are considered unclean because they will eat rotting flesh. They also have strong wings and can keep flying from place to place. As a result, the raven did not return to the ark but flew from place to place until the water was dried up from the earth.

In contrast, Noah also sent out a dove to see if the waters had receded. A dove does not have nearly as strong of wings as a raven. As a result, the dove could not continue to fly. In addition, a dove will not eat many of the things that a raven will eat, so there was no food that the dove could find to eat. The dove could not find a place to rest, so the dove returned to the ark to Noah. When the dove returned, Noah knew that she could not find a place to rest. A dove is also called a pigeon in part of the verses where it is used in the Bible. Only clean animals or birds could be used as sacrifices. Leviticus 5:7 says, ““If he is not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring to the Lord, for his trespass which he has committed, two turtledoves or two young pigeons: one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering.”” Here, we see that a poor person could use a pigeon as a sacrifice instead of a lamb. That was possible because a pigeon or dove was a clean bird that did not eat dead flesh. Instead, their food comes from different kinds of plants.

Noah saw that the dove had returned to the ark, so he reached out and took the dove and brought her back into the ark so the dove would have a place to rest and be fed. Noah knew when the dove returned, there was no place for her to land and no food for her to eat. That was a clear indication that plant life was not yet growing enough to provide food for the animals, birds, creeping things, and the family of Noah. As a result, Noah waited seven days and then sent out the dove again. This time, the bird did not come back until the evening. When the dove returned, she had a freshly picked olive leaf in her mouth. This let Noah know that the trees were beginning to send out leaves, which meant that the water of the flood was no longer on the earth.

Here, we see that the trees and the plants were able to live through this time when they were under the water. In fact, many plants need to periodically have floods or large amounts of water in order to grow properly. God told the people of Israel, in Deuteronomy 11:13-14, ““And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the Lord your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, then I will give *you* the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil.””” In these verses, we see that God made it clear that plentiful rain was necessary for the crops to have a good harvest. In many places, rivers will flood each year to provide the water needed for good crops to grow. As a result, the plants and the trees were able to survive the flood and begin to grow again once the flood receded.

Noah waited seven more days and then sent out the dove a third time. This time, the dove did not return. This meant that the dove had found a place where it could rest. As a result, Noah knew that the land was beginning to dry and they would soon be able to leave the ark. God had taken Noah through the flood in the protection of the ark. Soon, it would be time for him and his family to begin to carry out the command that God had given to Adam to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. In fact, God would soon repeat that same command to Noah. Genesis 9:7 says, ““And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it.”” God continued to have His original plan to fill the earth with people, even though most of mankind had become so evil that He had to destroy everyone except the family of Noah.

Today, there are more than seven billion people living on the earth. The desire of God is for each of them to have the opportunity to hear how to have spiritual life as well as physical life. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain that message clearly so they can explain to others how to come to repentance and faith in Christ and receive forgiveness of sin and eternal life. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this message to others.