

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 7

This chapter begins with an order to Noah to come with his family and all the creatures into the ark, that they might be safe from the flood, which would quickly be upon the earth, (^{<0070>}Genesis 7:1-4) and then gives an account of Noah's obedience to the divine command in every particular, (^{<0075>}Genesis 7:5-9) and of the time of the beginning of the flood, and its prevalence, (^{<0070>}Genesis 7:10-12) then follows a repetition of Noah, his family, and the creatures entering into the ark, (^{<0073>}Genesis 7:13-16) and next a relation is given of the increase of the waters, and of the height they arrived unto, (^{<0077>}Genesis 7:17-20) and of the consequences of the flood, the death and destruction of every living creature, except those in the ark, fowl, cattle, beast, creeping things, and men, (^{<0072>}Genesis 7:21-23) and the chapter is closed with an account how long the waters continued before they began to ebb, even one hundred and fifty days, (^{<0074>}Genesis 7:24).

Ver. 1. *And the Lord said unto Noah,* etc.] After Noah had built the ark, and got all things ready as were commanded him; and when it was but seven days ere the flood would begin:

Come thou and all thy house into the ark; that is, he and his wife, his three sons and their wives;

for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation: this was a great character of Noah; that he was a "righteous" person, not by his own righteousness, but by the righteousness of faith he was both heir and preacher of; and this he was "before" God, in his sight, seen, known, and acknowledged by him as righteous; and therefore must be really so: and this shows that he was not so by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of Christ; because by them no flesh living is justified in the sight of God: and Noah was a rare instance of this character; there was none besides him in that wicked generation, so that he was very conspicuous and remarkable; and it was wonderful grace to him, that he should have this blessing to be righteous in an age so sadly corrupt, which was the cause of his being saved; for whoever are justified shall be saved

eternally, (^{<580>}Romans 8:30) as well as they are often saved from temporal calamities, (see ^{<280>}Isaiah 3:10).

Ver. 2. *Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens*, etc.] From hence it appears, that the distinction of clean and unclean beasts, at least for sacrifice, if not for food, was known before the flood, and so before the law of Moses; though some think this is said by anticipation, and as providing a large stock of such creatures for the propagation of their species; because they would be most serviceable to men both for food and sacrifice: but as it is certain that sacrifices were offered ever since the fall of man; by the same way, namely, by divine revelation, that men were taught to sacrifice creatures as typical of the sacrifice of Christ, they were directed what sort of creatures to offer, as were most suitable figures of him; those beasts that were clean, and used under the law, and so no doubt, at this time, were oxen, sheep, and goats: and these were to be taken into the ark by “sevens”, or “seven seven”^{f409}; either only three pairs, male and female, for procreation, and the seventh a male for sacrifice, when the flood was over; or rather fourteen, seven couple, an equal number of male and female, as Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom, that there might be enough for propagation; since a large number of them would be consumed, both for food and sacrifice:

the male and his female, or “the man and his wife”^{f410}; which confirms the sense given, that there were seven pairs, or otherwise, if there had been an odd seventh, there would not have been a male and his female:

and of beasts that are not clean by two, or only two:

the male and his female, or “the man and his wife”; which was a number sufficient for the propagation of creatures neither used for food nor sacrifice; and many of which are harmful to mankind, as lions, wolves, tigers, bears, etc.

Ver. 3. *Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and his female*, etc.] That is, of such as were clean; seven couple of these were to be brought into the ark, for the like use as of the clean beasts, and those under the law; and so at this time, and here meant were turtledoves, and young pigeons that were for sacrifice; and the rest were for food: and the design of bringing both into the ark was,

to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth; that the species of creatures might be continued, both of beasts and birds, clean and unclean.

Ver. 4. *For yet seven days*, etc.] Or one week more, after the above orders were given, which, the Jews say, were for the mourning at Methuselah's death; others, that they were an additional space to the one hundred and twenty given to the old world for repentance; in which time some might truly repent, finding that the destruction of the world was very near, and who might be saved from everlasting damnation, though not from perishing in the flood: but it rather was a space of time proper for Noah to have, to settle himself and family, and all the creatures in the ark, and dispose of everything there, in the best manner, for their sustenance and safety:

and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights: this was not an ordinary but an extraordinary rain, in which the power and providence of God were eminently concerned, both with respect to the continuance of it, and the quantity of water that fell:

and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth: not every substance that has a vegetative life, as plants, herbs, and trees, which were not destroyed, (see ^{<008B>}Genesis 8:11) but every substance that has animal life, as fowls, cattle, creeping things, and men.

Ver. 5. *And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him*, etc.] He prepared for his entrance into the ark, and all the creatures with him; got everything ready for them, the rooms for their habitation, and food for their sustenance.

Ver. 6. *And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth*, etc.] When it began, for he was in his six hundred and first year when it ended, (^{<008B>}Genesis 8:13) his eldest son was now an hundred years old, since when Noah was five hundred years old he begat children, (^{<008B>}Genesis 5:32).

Ver. 7. *And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark*, etc.] Within the space of the seven days, between the command of God to go into it, and the coming of the flood; or rather on the seventh day, on which it began to rain; when he saw it was coming on, (see ^{<007B>}Genesis 7:11,13)

because of the waters of the flood; for fear of them, lest, before he entered into the ark with his family, he and they should be carried away with them; or "from the face of the waters"^{f411}, which now began to appear and spread; or rather, "before the waters"^{f412}, before they came to any height.

Ver. 8. *Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean,* etc.] Seven couple of the one, and a couple of the other:

and of fowls, clean and unclean, also a like number:

and of everything that creepeth upon the earth; and upon that only, not in the water, for these had no need of the ark, they could live in the waters.

Ver. 9. *There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark,* etc.] Of themselves, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, being impressed with an instinct from God so to do; or by the ministry of angels, as observed (see Gill on “~~(006)~~Genesis 6:20”) there were two of a sort, and some think four:

the male and the female; and of some seven, or seven pairs, as before observed:

as God commanded Noah; which respects his own and his family’s entrance and the creatures; both were commanded by God, and attended to by Noah, who was obedient in all things.

Ver. 10. *And it came to pass after seven days,* etc.] Were ended, or on the seventh day, after God had given the orders to Noah, to prepare for his going into the ark, with his family, and all the creatures:

that the waters of the flood were upon the earth: that is, they began to be upon the earth; for it continued to rain from hence forty days and forty nights; and still the waters continued to increase, and it was an hundred and fifty days before they began to ebb.

Ver. 11. *In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life,* etc.] Not complete, but current, for otherwise Noah would have lived after the flood three hundred and fifty one years, whereas he lived but three hundred and fifty; (~~(008)~~Genesis 9:28)

in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month: as the Jews had two ways of beginning their year, one at the spring, and the other at autumn; the one on ecclesiastical accounts, which began at Nisan, and which answers to March and April; and then the second month must be Ijar, which answers to part of April and part of May: and the other on civil accounts, which began at Tisri, and answers to part of September and part of October; and then the second month must be Marchesvan, which answers to part of October and part of November; so they are divided about this month in which the flood was: one says it was Marchesvan;

another that it was Ijar^{f413}; a third in particular says^{f414} it was on the tenth of Marchesvan that all the creatures came together into the ark, and on the seventeenth the waters of the flood descended on the earth; and this is most likely, since this was the most ancient way of beginning the year; for it was not until after the Jews came out of Egypt that they began their year in Nisan on sacred accounts; and besides the autumn was a proper time for Noah's gathering in the fruits of the earth, to lay up in the ark, as well as for the falling of the rains; though others think it was in the spring, in the most pleasant time of the year, and when the flood was least expected: the Arabic writers^{f415}, contrary to both, and to the Scripture, say, that Noah, with his sons, and their wives, and whomsoever the Lord bid him take into the ark, entered on a Friday, the twenty seventh day of the month Adar or Agar: according to the Chaldean account by Berosus^{f416}, it was predicted that mankind would be destroyed by a flood on the fifteenth of the month Daesius, the second month from the vernal equinox: it is very remarkable what Plutarch^{f417} relates, that Osiris went into the ark the seventeenth of Athyr, which month is the second after the autumnal equinox, and entirely agrees with the account of Moses concerning Noah: according to Bishop Usher, it was on the seventh of December, on the first day of the week; others the sixth of November; with Mr. Whiston the twenty eighth:

the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened; and by both these the flood of waters was brought upon the earth, which drowned it, and all the creatures in it: by the former are meant the vast quantities of subterraneous waters, which are more or greater than we know; and might be greater still at the time of the deluge:

“there are large lakes, (as Seneca observes^{f418},) which we see not, much of the sea that lies hidden, and many rivers that slide in secret:”

so that those vast quantities of water in the bowels of the earth being pressed upwards, by the falling down of the earth, or by some other cause unknown to us, as Bishop Patrick observes, gushed out violently in several parts of the earth, where holes and gaps were made, and where they either found or made a vent, which, with the forty days' rain, might well make such a flood as here described: it is observed^{f419}, there are seas which have so many rivers running into them, which must be emptied in an unknown manner, by some subterraneous passages, as the Euxine sea; and

particularly it is remarked of the Caspian sea, reckoned in length to be above one hundred and twenty German leagues, and in breadth from east to west about ninety, that it has no visible way for the water to run out, and yet it receives into its bosom near one hundred rivers, and particularly the great river Volga, which is of itself like a sea for largeness, and is supposed to empty so much water into it in a year's time, as might suffice to cover the whole earth, and yet it is never increased nor diminished, nor is it observed to ebb or flow: so that if, says my author, the fountains of the great deep, or these subterraneous passages, were continued to be let loose, without any reflux into them, as Moses supposes, during the time of the rain of forty days and forty nights; and the waters ascended but a quarter of a mile in an hour; yet in forty days it would drain all the waters for two hundred and forty miles deep; which would, no doubt, be sufficient to cover the earth above four miles high: and by the former, "the windows" or flood gates of heaven, or the "cataracts", as the Septuagint version, may be meant the clouds, as Sir Walter Raleigh^{f420} interprets them; Moses using the word, he says, to express the violence of the rains, and pouring down of waters; for whosoever, adds he, hath seen those fallings of water which sometimes happen in the Indies, which are called "the spouts", where clouds do not break into drops, but fall with a resistless violence in one body, may properly use that manner of speech which Moses did, that the windows or flood gates of heaven were opened, or that the waters fell contrary to custom, and that order which we call natural; God then loosened the power retentive in the uppermost air, and the waters fell in abundance: and another writer upon this observes^{f421}, that thick air is easily turned into water; and that round the earth there is a thicker air, which we call the "atmosphere"; which, the further it is distant from the earth, the thinner it is, and so it grows thinner in proportion, until it loseth all its watery quality: how far this may extend cannot be determined; it may reach as far as the orb of the moon, for aught we know to the contrary; now when this retentive quality of waters was withdrawn, Moses tells us, that "the rain was upon the earth forty days" and "forty nights": and therefore some of it might come so far as to be forty days in falling; and if we allow the rain a little more than ten miles in an hour, or two hundred and fifty miles in a day, then all the watery particles, which were 10,000 miles high, might descend upon the earth; and this alone might be more than sufficient to cover the highest mountains.

Ver. 12. *And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights,* etc.] So long it was falling upon it, after the windows of heaven were opened. Aben Ezra would have it, that all things were in such confusion, during the flood, that there was no difference between day and night, since, it is said, “day and night shall not cease any more”; and that after the waters ceased, then Noah knew that forty days and nights had passed, for God had revealed this secret to him; but the text seems more to make against him than for him.

Ver. 13. *In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah,* etc.] That is, on the seventeenth day of the second month; (see Gill on “~~0071~~Genesis 7:11”) the names of Noah and his three sons are expressed, but not the names of his wife, and of the wives of his sons; they are only described by their relation as follows:

and Noah’s wife, and the three wives of his sons, into the ark: but other writers pretend to give us their names; Berosus ^{f424} calls the wife of Noah “Tytea”, the great, and Aretia, plainly from “Tit”, clay, and “Aerets”, the earth; and his sons’ wives Pandora, Noela, and Noegla: according to Sanchoniatho ^{f425}, the name of Noah was “Epigeus”, a man of the earth, (see ~~0020~~Genesis 9:20) and afterwards “Ouranus”, heaven; and he had a sister whom he married, called “Ge”, earth; and with this agrees the account that the Allantes give of their deities; the first of which was Uranus, and his wife’s name was Titaea; who, after her death, was deified, and called “Ge” ^{f426}: so the Jewish writers say ^{f427}, the wife of Noah was called Titzia, and others say Aritzia, from the word “Eretz”, earth ^{f428}; though others will have it, that she was Naamah, the daughter of Lamech: the Arabic writers ^{f429} tell us, that the name of Noah’s wife was Hancel, the daughter of Namusa, the son of Enoch; that the name of Shem’s wife was Zalbeth, or, as other copies, Zalith or Salit; that the name of Ham’s Nahalath; and of Japheth’s Aresisia; who were all three the daughters of Methuselah; and they also relate ^{f430}, that when Noah entered the ark, he took the body of Adam with him, and placed it in the middle of the ark.

Ver. 14. *They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind,* etc.] They, Noah and his family, went into the ark; as did all sorts of beasts and cattle, reckoned one hundred and thirty sorts, by some one hundred and fifty, including serpents:

and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind; supposed to be scarce thirty sorts; not one sort of creature was left out, though ever so small, and despicable:

every fowl after his kind; Bishop Wilkins has divided them into nine sorts, and reckons them up to be one hundred and ninety five in the whole;

every [bird of] every sort, or “bird of every wing”^{f431}, let their wings be what they will; some, as Ainsworth observes, are winged with feathers, others with skin, as bats.

Ver. 15. *And they went in unto Noah into the ark,* etc.] Noah went in first, and the creatures of themselves came to him, or were conducted by the ministry of angels; and they were delivered into his hands, and he placed them in the ark as was most convenient for them: it is very likely he went in and out as occasion required, for the better management and disposition of things; for he seems to be the last of all that went in, (see ^{<0076>}Genesis 7:16):

two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life; they that went by sevens, yet being seven couples, as has been observed, as those which were only two or four, went by pairs: this is true of them all.

Ver. 16. *And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh,* etc.] These pairs were not two males or two females, but one male and one female; so they were coupled for the propagation of their species, which was the end of their entering into the ark, and being preserved:

as God had commanded him: Noah, who took care, as they entered, that there were so many of a sort as was enjoined, and these were male and female:

and the Lord shut him in; or shut the door after him^{f432}, he being the last that entered; and which he could not so well shut himself, at least so close, as was done by the Lord, or by the angels; and this was done to keep out the waters, and all within in safety; and to shut out others, and preserve Noah from the rage of wicked men, as well as the violence of the waters: some^{f433} have thought that not so much the door of the ark is meant, as the way to it, the pensile bridge which was necessary for the creatures to enter the ark; which being carried away by the force of the waters near the ark, that not being joined to it, precluded all access of the scoffers, whose scoffs were soon turned to lamentation and howling.

Ver. 17. *And the flood was forty days upon the earth,* etc.] This is said with respect to what follows, and the meaning is, that when and after the flood had been upon the earth so long, then

the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth; after this they were so many and so strong that they lifted up the ark from the place where it stood, and bore it up, that it touched not the earth; and Aben Ezra from hence infers, that the ark did not remove from its place after the flood began, until forty days.

Ver. 18. *And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth,* etc.] Still they became greater and more powerful, as to bear up the ark, so to cast down houses, trees, etc. by the continual rains that fell, though perhaps they were not so violent as before, and by the constant eruptions of water out of the earth:

and the ark went upon the face of the waters; it floated about upon them, in an easy gentle manner; for there were no storms of wind or tempests raised, which might endanger it.

Ver. 19. *And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth,* etc.] Yet more and more, so that the people without the ark were obliged to remove, not only from the lower to the higher rooms in their houses, and to the tops of them, but to the highest trees; and when these were bore down, to the highest hills and mountains; and to those it was in vain to fly, by what follows:

and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered: whence it appears there were hills before the flood, and that these were not caused by it, and that the deluge was universal, since there was not a hill under the whole heaven but what was covered with it. In Deucalion's flood all men are said to perish, except a few who fled to the high mountains^{f434}; which story seems to be hammered out of this account.

Ver. 20. *Fifteen cubits upwards did the waters prevail,* etc.] Either to such an height above the earth, upwards from that, or from the high hills; for though the words do not necessarily imply that, yet it may be allowed, since there was water enough to cover the highest of them; and fifteen cubits of water were enough to drown the tallest man, or largest beast that should be upon the top of any of them:

and the mountains were covered, with water, even it may be allowed fifteen cubits high; nor will this furnish out so considerable an objection to the history of the flood as may be thought at first sight, since the highest mountains are not near so high as they are by some calculated. Sir Walter Raleigh allows thirty miles for the height of the mountains, yet the highest in the world will not be found to be above six direct miles in height. Olympus, whose height is so extolled by the poets, does not exceed a mile and a half perpendicular, and about seventy paces. Mount Athos, said to cast its shade into the isle of Lemnos (according to, Pliny eighty seven miles) is not above two miles in height, nor Caucasus much more; nay, the Peak of Teneriff, reputed the highest mountain in the world, may be ascended in three days (according to the proportion of eight furlongs to a day's journey), which makes about the height of a German mile perpendicular; and the Spaniards affirm, that the Andes, those lofty mountains of Peru, in comparison of which they say the Alps are but cottages, may be ascended in four days' compass ^{f435}.

Ver. 21. *And all flesh died that moved upon the earth*, etc.] That had animal life in them, of which motion was a sign:

both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth; excepting those that were in the ark. This general destruction of the creatures, as it was for the sins of men, whose they were, and by whom they were abused, and is expressive of God's hatred of sin, and of his holiness and justice in the punishment of it; so, on the other hand, it is a display both of the wisdom of God, in causing a decrease of the creatures, in proportion to the decrease of men, who now would not need so many; and of the goodness of God to those that were spared, that so the beasts of the field, especially the wilder sort, might not multiply against them, and prevail over them, (see ⁽¹²³⁾Exodus 23:29)

and every man: except those in the ark; and the number of them is supposed to be as great, if not greater, than of the present inhabitants of the earth, by those who are skilful in the calculation of the increase of men. It is thought it may be easily allowed, that their number amounted to eleven billion; and some have made their number to be eighty billion ^{f436}. The Apostle Peter calls them, the world of the ungodly, (⁽¹¹⁵⁾2 Peter 2:5).

Ver. 22. *All in whose nostrils [was] the breath of life*, etc.] Whether of fowls, beast, cattle, or creeping things:

of all that was in the dry land, died; by which description fishes were excepted, since they breathe not, having no lungs, and are not on the dry land, where they cannot live, but in the waters. Some pretend it to be the opinion of some Jewish writers, that the fishes did die, the waters being made hot, and scalded them; but this fable I have not met with.

Ver. 23. *And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground*, etc.] Not everything, particularly trees; for after the flood was abated there was an olive tree, a leaf of which was brought to Noah by the dove, (^{<ORBI>}Genesis 8:11) but all animals,

both men and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven, and they were destroyed from the earth; this is repeated, partly for explanation of the preceding clause, and partly for confirmation of this general destruction, which might seem almost incredible; there never was such a destruction of creatures before, or since, nor never will be till the general conflagration; and is a proof of the sovereignty of God, his almighty power, the purity and holiness of his nature, and the strictness and severity of his justice, and shows what a fearful thing it is to fall into his hands:

and Noah only remained [alive], and they that [were] with him in the ark; besides those, of the millions of mankind that were upon the earth, not one was left, the flood came and destroyed them all, (^{<DITZ>}Luke 17:27) the fable some Jewish writers relate of Og being found alive, and which they gather from (^{<RBI>}Deuteronomy 3:11) by sitting upon a piece of wood of one of the ladders of the ark, to whom Noah reached out food every day, and so he remained alive^{f437}, deserves no regard; though perhaps from hence arose the Grecian fable of the flood of Ogyges, which seems to be the same with this of Noah.

Ver. 24. *And the waters prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days*.] Which is to be reckoned not from the end of the forty days' rain, but from the beginning of the flood; for from the seventeenth day of the second month, when the fountains of the deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, unto the seventeenth day of the seventh month, when the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat, and the waters decreased, were just five months, or one hundred and fifty days; until which time the waters increased yet more and more, even after the forty days' rain; so that it seems there was a continual rain afterwards, as Aben Ezra observes,

though not so vehement; or otherwise it is not so easy to account for the increase of the waters.