

Is There an Og on Your Ark?

Parashah Noach Message 2018

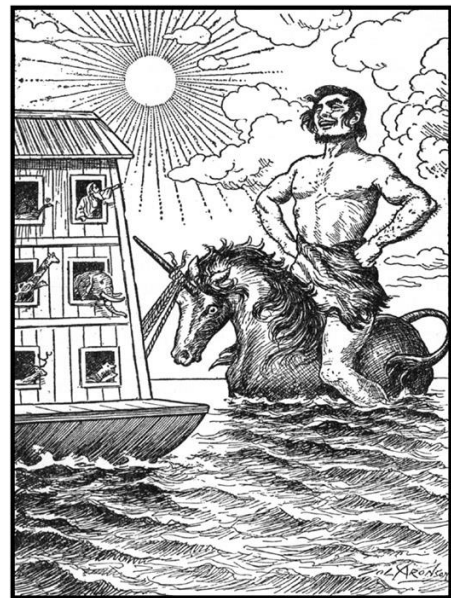
Introduction:

Most of what people know about the story of Noah's Ark comes from what they learnt in Sunday school. It is the story of the cleansing and rescue of a remnant of mankind. It is an archetype for the cleansing and rescue of every member of the human race. The story of Noah is the pruning down of man to its root with the preservation of eight people. It is shocking, it is almost unbelievable and should provoke a lot of questions from the student. Noah, whose Hebrew name, Noach means "rest" was the conduit for the narrowest bottle-neck of survival that has and will ever happen throughout all human history. It was like getting the DNA of a camel on a single hair and pushing it through the eye of a needle.

While many know the classic story, few know some of the finer details that aren't so obviously presented in the English narrative or the stories that are related through Jewish oral tradition. The mere title of this essay would most likely be a mystery to most, though they might know of the giant Og and his exploits.

In addition to Noah, his family and the animals on the Ark, the giant Og¹ managed to survive the flood. I know how absolutely unbelievable this is, but it does seem to have some Scriptural basis. The story is based on two verses in Scripture and some deducting reasoning. **Deuteronomy 3:11** states that "**For only Og melek [king] of Bashan remained of the remnant of the Rephayim [Giants]**") and **Genesis 6:4** states that "**There were Nephilim in the earth in those days; and also after that...**"

The story goes that he either clung onto the ark or kept himself afloat by some other means near the Ark. He was fed by Noah after promising that he would help his descendants some time in the future. And this it appears he did as it is commonly believed that the fugitive who informed Avraham of Lot and his households capture was believed almost unanimously as being non-other than the exceedingly old giant Og. Indeed, some translations render the expression, "**...one that had escaped...**" "**And there came one that had escaped, and told**



Avram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Avram.” (Genesis 14:13) “Escaped” refers to Og not only having escaped the battle of the kings but also death during the flood. His act of telling Avram about Lot granted him long life, though his motive was not honourable. This wrong motive was dealt with at his eventual defeat by Avram’s descendants **(Deuteronomy 1:4; 31:4)**.

So, in a way, Og was to Noah what Lot was to Avraham. Throughout the ages of believers there have come and gone, many of us who step out in faith and adopt this walk, have also brought baggage with us that is sometimes difficult to completely jettison. But before we get into that lets look at some facts about the story of the flood itself.

Parshah Summary:

Noah, a righteous man, is introduced in contrast to a generation that "has perverted its ways". Elohim instructs him to build, and outfit the Ark.

Noah is told to enter the Ark along with all the animals. On Cheshvan 17, 1656 - October 27, 2106 BCE the flood began.

For 40 days and nights the waters increased, destroying all living things. The water raged upon the surface of the earth for 150 days, and then diminished for the next 150. On Nissan 17, May 23, the Ark rested upon **“the mountains of Ararat.”** Noah sends out the Raven and then the Dove, and on Cheshvan 27, October 27, exactly 1 solar year after it began, the earth was dry.

The parshah of Noah is a frightening one for it illustrates to us the possibility of human life, as we know it, to self-destruct.

Free Will

It all comes down to the gift of freewill. Free will can do us good or it can do us harm, and for the most part, a man’s free will is left uninhibited. To still have freewill is to still have a chance of choosing good over evil. In some cases, when a person has been abandoned by Yah, yet still lives, even his freewill is affected as in the case of Pharaoh who whenever he felt like surrounding to Moshe’s warnings had his heart re-hardened each time. **“But Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moshe and A’aron, just as Yahweh had said to Moshe.” (Exodus 9:12)**

“Who is wise? He will realize these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. The ways of Yahweh are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them.” (Hosea 14:9)

Life and death are all around us. **“See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love Yahweh your Elohim, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and Yahweh your Elohim will bless you in the land you are entering to possess... This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love Yahweh your Elohim, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For Yahweh is your life...” (Deuteronomy 30:15-16, 19-20)**

Life – the things in it can be a means of production for one person can be the cause of another man’s demise. A bottle of wine, a telephone, a car, a bundle of money, a biological urge, or practically anything can be properly used or abused. It is not only universally true about things but ideas as well. Even the Torah can be a stepping stone or a stumbling block depending on how one either understands or mangles its meaning and message. The more potent a thing, the more it has a capacity for either constructiveness or destructiveness. At the core of this issue is “free will”.

I heard a story about a Sunday School teacher who said that “the cruel “G-d” of the Old Testament” brought the flood but how that can never happen again because the later new “improved” version “J-sus” came to introduced an era of love.

Thanks to the heresy of the apostate Marcion, many people still believe this. I sat there like most people bound by blanket of ignorance. How would I answer it today? Let us deal with the premise of that terrible and insulting phrase, “the cruel “G-d” of the Old Testament!” Was the great flood an act of a capricious cruelty? Just the opposite is true!

The flood was as a much a joyful thing as an assailant who is trying to kill your child getting swept away to his death. Sure, it would be better for no such person to threaten your child, but that’s the climate and they are being removed from harming your precious offspring. Furthermore, the flood in the Old Testament consisted of water raining down on the world and yet the next cleansing in the so-called fun-loving New Testament will consist of hail, fire and blood. **“The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.” (Revelation 8:7)**

“There were ten generations from Adam to Noach to let you know the extent of His patience that all the generations acted infuriatingly until He brought upon them the waters of the flood. (Pirke Avos 5:2-3)

Rashi comments on those 10 generations, “He was waiting for them, maybe they would -do Teshuva- return/repent!” Ten long generations - 1656 years, day after day, moment by moment Yahweh feeds and clothes and maintains each detail of a world and a humanity that not only doesn’t love Him but perverts everything He’s created doing damage to creation and one another.

“And it came to pass after the seven-day period that the waters of the Flood were upon the earth.” (Breishis 7:10) Our sages tell us, “We learn from here that the Holy One, Blessed Be He, gave them seven days after the final decree, maybe they would do teshuvah...” (Tosefta Sota) Not only was there extraordinary patience for ten long degenerate generations but hope was extended up until and past the last days.

So, we see that Elohim shows that wicked generation immense leniency and patience, however the last days have a multitude of cataclysms introduced at increments like the horrific plagues of Egypt. The last days will be more like the plagues in Egypt and yet the Word says the that it will be more like the days of Noach. Or does it?

“Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.” (Luke 17:26-27)

In fact, when the cataclysms come in the last days they will be more like the time of the plagues, but they will come in the same manner as the flood, catching the generation off guard.

So how do we not succumb to the horrors that are about to come? Well, firstly and foremostly, it is not by trying to set dates of coming cataclysmic events, moving into the mountains, becoming a prepper, or going off the grid. You can garner yourself layers of impenetrable protection by walking in the loving guidance of the Torah. This means planning your life around your prayer, study, charity, Shabbat, High Holidays and taking constant accounting of your life, making daily accounts and reflecting and doing constant t’shuvah. Abandon any conduct that you know is wrong, if you can’t abandon it, seek help. Sometimes people need more than prayer. Sometimes people need your time, assistance in moving to a new house, monetary help, advice, or maybe even just a hug.

Don’t go running after things that you don’t need and ignore the things that you need. If you do, the thing that should be your salvation becomes your snare. Water is a life-giving sustenance and it comes from heaven, the sky, normally it revitalizes the land, helps crops grow to feed the world’s inhabitants and yet the generation had become so corrupt that it became their executioner. It’s the same with the Torah. The Torah is equated with fire and this fire can illuminate to you a correct path, a lamp to your feet. It can provide warmth in the nights even protection. Most camps in the wilderness are more secure from wild animals if they keep a fire going. But, if we misuse the Torah by misapplying it, by tracking down pathways that don’t really help us, the fire can burn us.

Did you know that the least studied and applied form of Torah today is Torah that improves character traits and behaviour? Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, Lamentations are all but ignored as books to regularly pour over to improve a person’s demeanor and personality. In contrast people flock to the Book of Revelation and the Book of Enoch like people drawn to looking at a car crash.

Faith & Unity

Noah lived through the most trying time in earth’s history to say the least. He survived not only a generation of spiritual chaos, climate upheaval, but physical annihilation as well. However, Yahweh walked with him and guided him. He instructed him every step of the way. He warned him of the impending flood. He instructed him to build an ark. He told him to bring all the animals to the ark, **“Noah with his wife and sons and his son’s wives with him, went into the ark because of the waters of the Flood.” (Genesis 7:6)**

“By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.” (Hebrews 11:7)

He had to believe – He had to “faith”! By faith Noah spoke to Yahweh! By faith he built the ark! By faith he gathered all the animals! By faith he was the only one in his generation to worry about the impending doom! Surely, he must have had supreme faith! Yes, but he still lacked a tiny extent of faith because Noah did not enter the ark until the rain forced him to. The

Torah tells us that, **“Noah with his wife and sons and his son's wives with him, went into the ark because of the waters of the Flood” (Genesis 7:6).**

It reminds me of a story: “In a small town there was a severe drought. The people prayed for rain but to no avail. The tears and prayers failed to unlock the sealed heavens, and for months, no rains came.

Finally, the town's eldest Rabbi held a meeting with prominent community leaders. “There are two items lacking in our approach, faith and unity. Each one of you must meet both criteria - faith and unity. If we are united and have faith, our prayers will be answered!” He said, “I assure you if we are in one mind and one accord and we have faith no one will leave that prayer service without getting drenched!”

A date was set for a prayer vigil. On the designated day the entire town gathered in a large field whose crops had long withered from the severe drought. Men, women, and children all gathered and anxiously awaited the beginning of the service.

The elderly Rabbi walked up to the podium. His eyes scanned the tremendous crowd that filled the large field and then they dimmed in dismay. The rabbi began shaking his head in dissatisfaction. "This will never work," he moaned dejectedly. "The rain will not come." Slowly he left the podium.

The town leaders were shocked. "But Rabbi everyone is here, and they are all united! Surely, they must believe that the rains will fall! Otherwise no one would have bothered to come on a working day!"

The rabbi shook his head slowly and sadly.

"No. They don't really believe," he stated. "I scanned the entire crowd. Nobody even brought a raincoat."

The level of faith that the Torah demanded from Noah would have had him bolt into the ark on the very morning that the Flood was meant to come. Noah should have moved himself and his family in the ark at zero hour without waiting for the rains to force him in. But he waited to see if it would really come.

Even Noah, who by faith built the ark under intense pressure, is held accountable for the lack of instinctive faith that should have been interred in his bones. And on that level of faith, unfortunately, all of us are found lacking.

The Storm Passed

"When the storm passes, a wicked one is no more, but a righteous one is the foundation of the world." (Proverbs 10:25)

R' Yehoshua ibn Shuiv z"l (Spain; early 14th century) writes: “Our Sages stated that this verse refers to the generation of the flood. **‘When the storm passes, a wicked one is no more.’** Like a storm, the generation of the flood did great damage and then met its end quickly. On the other hand, "a righteous one is the foundation of the world." From the righteous Noah, an entire new world was built. There is no room for prejudice or persecution because we're just one big family.

The Netzarim faith, the only faith that possesses the Torah and the Testimony (**Isaiah 8:20**). There will be no second physical ark that will be built to save us from the coming days. But what is the trait of those who are saved? If you say those that do t'shuvah you will not be entirely correct. Doing t'shuvah is only half of what helps you. The other half of the story is that you should tell other people how you are doing it. King David says, I will teach transgressors your ways. **"Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you."** (**Psalm 51:13**)

"Elohim did not spare the ancient world when He brought the flood on its ungodly people, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, among the eight" (**2 Peter 2:5**). He was a preacher of righteousness. Notice that he wasn't all that successful. That didn't matter. Why? Because everyone that came after him owes Noah their life. Noah saved your life! You were on the ark in the form of the vessels of the souls who accompanied him whose descendants' bodies your souls would eventually gestate in and come forth as a human being in the current age.

You stop the sin and then help others who are having difficulty with that sin. That assures your seat on the ark!

"By faith Noah, being warned by Elohim concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith" (**Hebrews 11:7**).

Yahshua HaMoshiach is our ark. Are you on board?