

INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK OF

GENESIS

BY

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CHAPTER 7

THE GREAT FLOOD

Amid the corruption of the earth, the Lord proclaimed His redemption of humanity, through the events of the great flood and the renewal of the earth, which carried a symbol of the salvation work of the Lord Christ.

1- God's care for Noah	1 -- 5
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1- God's Care For Noah:

In His exalted care for His children, God says:

"Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation"

(Gen. 7: 1)

How wonderful to see God testifying to His children, with such a true testimonial! If humanity, in those days, brought destruction over itself and the whole world, yet God remains testifying to righteousness of Noah; and for his sake, He cares for him and his household, planning his deliverance through the ark with such great accuracy, fixing its dimensions, the kind of wood to use, number of its decks, number and locations of windows ...etc.; then the number of clean and unclean beasts and birds together with everything that creeps on the earth, beside the necessary provisions. He instructed him to let all this in, along a duration of 7 days, and fixed 40 days and nights for the rain to pour on the earth (Gen. 7: 4)... All that for the sake of one righteous man, to establish a covenant with him (Gen. 6: 18); and here we notice:

a- Some believe that it took Noah 120 years to warn the wicked people, while he was busy building the ark before their eyes, to confirm the truth of God's warnings. They depend for their view on the phrase, *"Yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years"* (Gen. 6: 3); a view also adopted by many others even in the days of St. Augustine. Anyway, Noah, in his age of 600 years was a subject of people's ridicule, to build such a huge ark in his old age to escape a great flood, that was, according to them, a product of his imagination. Unfortunately, many

people took part in building it, earning wages for their work from the righteous man, and did not think about entering it to deliver themselves. In that, they represent some of the ministers of the word, who preach the evangelic truth as a job to earn their living; and as they do not live it, they perish, while others are saved, receiving the word from them in faith ! That is why, the apostle Paul walked cautiously in his preaching, saying: *“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified”* (1 Corinthians 9: 27).

b- *“Then the Lord said to Noah ... “You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, ...; two each of animals that are unclean,; also seven each of birds of the air, a male and his female of each”*

(Gen. 7: 3)

Some see that to be too great a number to be accommodated by the ark; so they claimed that the great flood had to be local and not general over all the regions of the earth; and that Noah committed himself to animals and birds that only live in his surroundings; but those vast and far continents that were still uninhabited by man, embraced animals and birds that survived until after the great flood. St. Augustine, on the other hand, believes that the ark was so huge, and that the cubit mentioned here, was a geographic cubit, that measured six time as the regular cubit; the ark thus could accommodate all animals and birds, etc.

c- Some believe that the phrase *“seven each of every clean animal, a male and a female”*, indicates that Noah took, of every kind, seven males and seven females; probably to offer of them sacrifices to the Lord, beside feeding on their flesh, he and his household. Others believe that that phrase can be interpreted, that he took seven of each kind: three males and three females, beside a seventh animal to be offered as a sacrifice to the Lord.

d- God did not instruct Noah about which of the animals are clean and which of them are unclean; As the Mosaic Law was not yet declared, some believe that the statute of clean and unclean animals was given by God orally to Adam, and delivered by tradition to successive generations; The Mosaic Law came to register what was already set, with more details.

e- The rain poured for forty days and forty nights; the same period of fasting by the Lord Christ, and by Moses and Elijah. In our study of the gospel according to the Evangelist Matthew, we saw that the figure 40 refers to the days of our life on earth; as though, as long as we are living on earth, we have to be hidden in the ark from the waters of the great flood, so as to stay protected in the Church of Christ by faith, and not to perish. If the great flood refers to Baptism, to destroy the old man, and to enjoy the new man, the pouring of rain for a duration of 40 days and 40 nights, refers to the commitment of the believer to remain all his life on earth reacting with the blessings of Baptism, through continuous repentance, in order to practice the renewed life, not just for a limited time, but for a lifetime with no end; his outer man perishing every day, while his inner man is renewed, setting forth stronger and stronger, and from glory to glory !

2- Entering the ark:

Noah, 600 years of age, entered into the ark with his wife, his sons and his son's wives, beside all animals and birds ... *"as God has commanded Noah"* (Gen. 7: 9). There was probably no natural indication of any flood, yet the procession started and continued to proceed to the ark for a duration of seven days, motivated only by God's commandment to Noah, and the obedience to it with faith in God's promises. While the world was mocking Noah, he was torn with grief for his brothers' sake, yearning to take all of them into the ark to be saved. The seven days duration of the procession, refers to the Church that opens the doors of hope before all men all days of the week, namely, all days of our sojourn on earth; It receives every humanbeing, even at the last breath of his life !

It is to be noticed that Noah and his sons, were married, each to only one wife, like their father Adam.

3- The Great Flood:

The Holy Book described the event of the great flood with great accuracy. It started on the seventeenth day of the second month of the 600 th. Year of Noah's age (Gen. 7: 10), that is the year 1656 of world history, or about the year 2349 BC according to the Hebrew calendar -- in the middle or the end of the month of November. Rain kept pouring for 40 days (Gen. 7: 12), *"and water prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days"* (Gen. 7: 24). Water dried up from the earth after 371 days from the beginning of the great flood, when God commanded Noah to leave the ark (Gen. 8: 13 - 16), on the 27 th. Day of the second month of the 601 st. year Of Noah's age (Gen. 8: 14), counting the year as 360 days according to lunar months.

In the present context we notice the following:

a- The expression *"All the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the widows of heaven were opened"* (Gen. 7: 11), indicates that great flood was not only caused by the heavy rains, but the whole earth became, as though it turned into fountains and springs gushing water with no end. Anyhow, if the believer, in his life, carries a consistent great flood, through continuous life of repentance, God will draw out of his earth (body), fountains of great deep, to sweep away and destroy every evil, and will grant his heavens (soul) incessant spiritual rains, to work together with the body, sanctified in the Lord. Thus, the sanctified body in the Lord, would work together with the soul, by the Holy Spirit of God, through the continuous repentance, in order that all features of the old life would come to an end in him, and he would always enjoy the strength of the new life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

b- The Holy Book says: *"And the Lord shut him in"* (Gen. 7: 16). The door remained open 7 days to receive the procession coming to enjoy salvation; but as the days of our life come to an end, the door will be shut; Those inside will be kept safe, perishment can not cross over to them, and those still outside will be denied enjoyment of the glories inside. This is what the Lord

Christ proclaimed in His talk about the Kingdom of heaven, simulating it to virgins entering with the Bridegroom; and as time comes, with the arrival of the Bridegroom, *“Those who were ready went in with Him to the wedding and the door was shut”* (Matthew 25: 10).

It is amazing that God, Himself shuts the door; as it is said, *“And the Lord shut him in”*; He, alone, *“has the keys of David; He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”* (Revelation 3: 7). He opened for us the gates of Paradise by the key of His cross, to enter with and in Him in the fellowship of His glories; and he shuts us in, eternally with Him, so as the evil enemy would never approach us.

4- Water rising high above the earth:

The phrase: *“Water rose high above the earth”*, beside other phrases with the same meaning (Gen. 7: 17; 18; 19; 20; 24) -- and the higher the water rose, the ark moved about on the surface of the water (Gen. 7: 18), above the high mountains under heaven (Gen. 7: 19). Water remained so risen above the earth for 150 days.

If man in his love for the earthlies became (earth) and (dust), water of Baptism can cover him up, to kill in him works of the old man, rising with his soul by the cross to the highs seeking the heavenlies. And if man, in his pride became a mighty and solid mountain, water would entirely cleanse him to become a holy mountain, carrying the fragrance of life, that is in Jesus Christ, instead of that old life characterized by pride.

We can say, that the more the believer is subjected to temptations, as though water of a great flood, yet we, are inside the ark -- the Church of Christ -- even if the ark is shaken for some time, yet temptations are around us but would never enter to us; they would attack us but would lift us up as water did with the ark; and the believer would remain, through temptations, rising in the eyes of God; so that when the days of affliction come to an end, he would settle down on the top of a mountain, and stays glorified in the Lord.

CHAPTER 8

NOAH'S SALVATION BY THE ARK

As the old world perished by the water of the great flood, the new world was set represented by Noah and the members of his family. God, Himself cared for their salvation and the renewal of the earth; and received the sacrifice of man as a fragrance of pleasure, to enter with him in a new covenant.

1- Wind passing over the earth	1 -- 5
2- Sending out a raven and a dove	6 -- 12
3- Removing the covering of the ark	13 -- 14
4- Noah gets out to the new earth	15 -- 19
5- Building an altar for the Lord	20 -- 22

1- Wind passing over the earth:

“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 water subsided. ... decreased continually until the tenth of the month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen”

(Gen. 8: 1, 5)

If God has shut Noah in, yet He will never forget him amid the waters, but, like a Potter, who watches over a clay pot inside the furnace, to take it out in due time as a pot of dignity. For the sake of the righteous Noah, fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, to cleanse and renew the earth for him, to let him enjoy a new world in place of the old one; and for him, He shut him in, to protect him against all surrounding currents. For his sake, he also made a wind to pass over the earth; we know that the two words: (wind) and (Spirit) are one and the same ... It is as though God, amid the water of Baptism, pass with His Holy Spirit, to sanctify our earth; to set us as members of the body of the Lord Christ, and a temple for His Holy Spirit. St. Clement of Alexandria says: [God creates man from dust, renew him by water, and let him grow by the Spirit].

Now, as the water quieted down and retreated, the ark rested, on the seventeenth day of the seventh month, on the Mountain of Ararat in Armenia -- its name derived from the acadian word, (Ararto), meaning a high place -- It probably is the summit now called in Turkish, (Aghri-Da), that is 16916 feet above the sea level.

On the first day of the tenth month, the tops of mountains of lesser height began to show. If the figure 10 refers to the Law, as man starts his life with the commandment (the spiritual Law), in him will appear the tops of the mountains of virtue, that were previously covered and disappeared because of our sins. If the ark -- the Lord Christ -- rests inside us as though on the mighty and solid Mountain of Ararat, He would transfigure inside us, and the pious life would appear in our depths, as tops of living mountains, when we receive His spiritual Law, to be as though on the first day of the tenth month.

2- Sending out a raven and a dove:

“It came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened a window of the ark which he had made. Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro”
(Gen. 8: 6, 7)

setting forth to where the corrupt corpses are, then to return to stand outside the ark.

“He also sent out a dove, ... But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, she returned into the ark to him, ... so he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. And he waited yet another 7 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.... So he waited yet another 7 days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore”

(Gen. 8: 8 - 12)

St. Augustine says: [If the ark refers to the Church, through the great flood of this world, it is seen, by necessity, to include both the doves and the ravens. What are the ravens? Those who seek their own. And what the doves? Those who seek the things which are of Christ Jesus (Philippians 2: 21)].

The raven refers to the sin which must be sent away; to set forth never to return to the ark, but keeps going to and fro, hesitating between the corrupt corpses and the ark from outside; Noah would not put out his hand to take it in as he did with the dove. St. Ambrosius says: [The raven is a symbol of sin that goes never to return; if righteousness is kept in you inside and outside]. And St. Jerome says: [The raven was sent out of the ark, and did not return; Afterwards the dove proclaimed peace on earth; Likewise in the Church, the devil, the meanest of birds, is driven away, then the dove of the Holy Spirit proclaims peace on our earth]. And he also says: [If the world falls into sin, nothing would be able to cleanse it, but the water of a great flood.

The dove of the Holy Spirit flew to Noah after the raven went far away, and became as though it was heading toward Christ in the Jordan (Matthew 3: 16); came carrying with her beak a branch that symbolizes to reform and light, to give the whole world the good news of peace].

If the raven has found food and a resting place for the sole of its feet, among the corrupt corpses, Yet the dove (the believing soul) would never find rest except in the hands of Noah ... It came out of the ark three times:

a- The first time it found no resting place for the sole of her foot; as a reference to the soul, inflamed by the Holy Spirit -- the heavenly dove -- which can not settle down or rest among the corrupt corpses; it is attracted toward the ark, to find the hand of her Christ put out to carry her in His bosom, as her resting place.

b- In the second time, it went out to the world, to return proclaiming the peace of Christ through the new world, after the disappearance of corpses and uprooting of corruption, through the new life in Jesus Christ. St. Augustine sees in the olive branch a symbol of peace from several aspects; the first is that the olive tree is evergreen, as though it represents man filled with peace, who would never lose his green by storms. From another aspect, olive oil, if another fluid like water is poured on it, would not corrupt, but would float over the other fluid without mixing with it; It is as though, like man, who when knocked over by temptations, would overcome them by floating over affliction.

c- In the third time, it went out of the ark, but did not return; not to desert Noah, but to proclaim the setting forth of the whole procession toward the new earth; as though representing man, set forth toward eternity, as a new life, not to be anymore in body in the Church seen on earth, but, being a member in it, he sets forth to where he encounters the whole procession on the clouds, to enter to glories.

3- Removing the covering of the ark

“Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry”

(Gen. 8: 13)

That was in the six hundred and first year of Noah's age, in the first month, the first day of the month ..., as though Noah ends the six hundred years, to begin the seventh generation of his age, by removing the cover of the ark, and looking at the new earth. By that he refers to the Lord Christ -- the true Noah -- the leader of the Church, who dwells in its midst for her comfort. He works the 6 days for the sake of salvation of his flock of 100 sheep (Luke 15: 4), all along the days of the Church life in strangeness on earth (6 x 100 = 600), up until the time comes to an end, and the seventh day comes, which is the day of rest, God removes every cover, to encounter Him face to face; and as said by the apostle Paul: *“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known”* (! Corinthians 13: 12). Thus, despite all what the apostle Paul enjoyed of divine proclamations, fellowship with God, and a taste of heavenly life, he counted himself in all this as though seeing dimly in a mirror, if compared to what he is to gain in the eternal encounter with God, face to face. St. John Chrysostom says: [God is hastening now to us, so that being

attached to him, we would know many things considered so far as secrets, and to enjoy the very blessed life and wisdom].

4- Noah gets out to the new earth:

In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was completely dried, and God commanded Noah to get out; that was 8 weeks after removing the covering from the ark, by the end of the fifty-third week from the onset of the great flood. The following is a simplified time-table of the events of the great flood:

- 1- Noah enters into the ark and the great flood begins (17/2/600 of his age).
[Seven days after the instruction to gather the animals and birds (17/2/600).
- 2- The duration of the pouring of rain and breaking of all fountains of the deep 40 days
- 3- Water prevailed on earth for 150 days, including the 40 days of the flood 110 days
- 4- Waters decreased, and the tops of the mountains were seen (1/10 /600) 74 days
- 5- Sending the raven out after 40 days 40 days
- 6- Sending the dove out for the first time after 7 days 7 days
- 7- Sending the dove out for the second time 7 days
- 8- Sending the dove out for the third time 7 days
- 9- From sending the dove out to removing the covering of the ark (1/1/601) 29 days
- 10- From removing the covering of the ark to the coming out of Noah (7/2 601) 57 days

The duration of events of the great flood, from its beginning to Noah's coming out of the ark (a year (360 days, according to lunar calendar, + 11 days) 371 days

5- Building an altar to the Lord:

The first thing that Noah did after he came out of the ark, was building an altar to the Lord on the new earth that was cleansed by the waters of the great flood; as though the Church can not offer the sacrifice of the Lord Christ (the Eucharst), before the enjoyment of Baptism. For this reason, we find the Holy Book proclaiming for the first time the building of an altar to the Lord; although sacrifices to the Lord were surely offered to the Lord after man came out of paradise.

God proclaimed His pleasure with man after smelling a soothing aroma through the sacrifice of reconciliation; confirming that He will never again curse the ground for man's sake, because of his weakness. How amazing is the forgiveness of the Lord !

The new life began with worship through the sacrifice, as though through the cross, so the curse was removed from the earth (Gen. 8: 21) ... Then man started to work for his daily needs.

Finally, the offering of Noah was a symbol for the sacrificing work of the Lord Christ in His Church; and as the priest says in the Liturgy: [