

Genesis Chapter 8 - Commentary By Mike Wells

Chapter 8 Overview:

Chapter 8 describes more about the flood. It also begins describes the gradual subsiding of the flood. There are really 4 main sections in this chapter: (1) God remembers Noah and dries the waters in verses 1-3. (2) The ark rests on Ararat, with Noah sending forth a raven and a dove in verses 4-12. (3) Noah leaves the ark in verses 13- 19. And, (4) Noah offers sacrifice to God and God promise to not curse the earth again in verses 20-22.

Genesis 8 : 1 – *And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged.*

- God never forgot Noah and then suddenly one day remembered him floating around.
- God was mindful of him the entire time.
- The first mention of wind is recorded.
- Many believe prior to the flood, there had never been wind.
- Now there is totally different atmospheric conditions.
- When the canopy collapsed it allowed air currents through and wind as we know it today.
- How severe the wind was we are not told.
- It could have been as strong as hurricane force.
- The reference of the “**waters asswag- ed**” means, ‘they began to subside.’

Genesis 8 : 2 - *The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained.*

- Both sources of water for the flood stopped
- Both the fountains of water from under the earth and the water falling from the broken canopy stopped

Genesis 8 : 3 - *And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.*

- The phrase, “**and the waters returned from off the earth continually**”, means the ‘waters began to go down step by step.’ (not all at once)
- The word translated as “**abated**” (*khawser*) has the sense of ‘decreased’ or ‘lowered.’
- In other words, after one-hundred-fifty days, the waters were receding.
- For one-hundred-fifty days, the waters of the flood were of full force upon the earth.
- The physical implications of this are amazing and powerful.
- Think about the weight of the water, the hydrological implications of the waters rolling across the face of the planet by the massive earthquakes and then immense winds, the draining action as the water began to drain off the continents into the newly depressed ocean basins was catastrophic.

- Again, not only was the face of the planet wiped clean, it was totally restructured.
- When Noah emerged it was an entirely new world he would see.

Genesis 8 : 4 - *And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.*

- Time for some quick math.
- The flood began in the second month of that year.
- It came to rest on the seventh month or five months later or about 150 day
- It rested upon the mountains of Ararat.
- Those mountains today are in northeastern Turkey

Genesis 8 : 5 - *And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.*

- The ark continued to rest upon Mount Ararat for another 4 1/2 months.
- On the first day of the tenth month “were the tops of the mountains seen.”
- Finally, Noah could see other mountain peaks emerging around where they sat.
- So after 10 months the tips of the mountains are just starting to show.
- So much for the traditional thought of the flood only lasting 40 days.

Genesis 8 : 6-7 – *6 And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: 7 And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.*

- Forty days later, Noah released a raven “which went to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.”
- The raven evidently came and went from the ark.
- It apparently flew back and forth until the flood had sufficiently dried up

Genesis 8 : 8-11 – *8 Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; 9 But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. 10 And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; 11 And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.*

- Then Noah released a dove and the dove returned to him and the ark in his hand.
- He waited 7 more days and released the dove again.
- This time she returned with an olive leaf in her beak. “*So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.*”
- The word translated as **abated** here is different from verse 3 as it comes from the word (*qalal*) which has the sense of ‘**slight**’ or ‘**of little account.**’

- In other words, there were places where the earth was still wet, but it was slight and not of any great amount.

Genesis 8 : 12 - And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.

- Noah then waited another seven days.
- Then he released the dove a third time
- The dove did not come back this time

Genesis 8 : 13 - And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first *month*, the first *day* of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.

- The reference to the year 601, 1st month and 1st day could be one of two things.
- 1st it could be a reference to Noah's birthday (see 7:11)
- 2nd it could be the first month of the calendar year of Noah's 601st year on earth.
- Either way the "*waters were dried up from off the earth.*"
- Noah therefore "*removed the covering of the ark*" (i.e., the door).
- "*And behold, the face of the earth was dry.*"

Genesis 8 : 14 - And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

- Another two months passed.
- By now the earth was fully dry.
- By doing the math from the start of the flood to this date in (Genesis 7:11), Noah and the animals were on the Ark for about 370 days.
- This is assuming the Hebrew lunar calendar of a 360 day year

Genesis 8 : 15-16 - 15 And God spake unto Noah, saying, 16 Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

- God gave them orders to leave the ark along with the animals.
- Note that Noah did not leave until God gave him clear instructions to do so.
- He waited on the Lord!!
- It must have been a time of great excitement.
- They had survived the flood through God's providential care.
- An entirely new world was before them.
- Its topography, geography, and climate was radically different.
- Noah and his sons saw weather patterns in the sky they had never seen.
- Though evidently the earth was already rejuvenating itself with greenery, there were no trees.

- They had left a subtropical earth, they now exited out onto the harsh winter-like climate of the mountains of Ararat.
- I bet it didn't take long for them to try to find a more hospitable place.
- They were the only people on the planet.
- The godless, wicked, world-system they had known was gone.
- It was only them, a small number of animals, and God.

17 Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

- God issued instructions to the animal kingdom to “*be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth*” once again!!

Genesis 8 : 18-19 - 18 And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: 19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

- Noah had entered the ark upon God's commandment
- Now he and his family left at God's commandment.
- As noted in **Hebrews 11:7**, by faith, Noah obeyed God.

Genesis 8 : 20 - Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; an took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar.

- This is the first recorded reference in the Bible of burnt-offerings however it is apparent Noah was familiar with doing it.
- Most likely this was common practice for the godly line through Noah to have sacrificed in this manner to God prior to the flood.
- God has always required a blood sacrifice, now and possibly before the flood also but unrecorded was added the burnt offerings.
- Explorers who claim to have found the ark also claim they saw what appeared to be an altar not far away which appeared to have charred rock thereon (this has never been validated though)

Genesis 8 : 21 - And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

- God received the sacrifice pronounced what has come to be called the Noahic Covenant.
- God describes Himself as actually smelling the aroma of the sacrifice made unto Him being pleased with it.

Genesis 8 : 22 - *While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*

- The Noahic Covenant remains in force to this day.
- God promised Noah (and us by extension) that He would never again “*curse the ground any more for man’s sake.*”
- He notes once again that “*the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.*”
- Then God promised that He neither would “*again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.*”
- Never again would God destroy the earth by a flood.
- “*While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*”
- There are some deep implications into what God said here.
- First, He implied the earth would not remain forever.
- It someday would be replaced.
- This is the first implication of a new earth someday.
- However, in the meantime, there would be seasons as well as day and night.
- What is implied is that prior to the flood, there had not been seasons as we know them today.
- We know that the seasons are caused by the tilt of the earth’s axis in relation to the sun and how it regularly goes through an annual cycle as the earth orbits the sun.
- Prior to the flood, the earth evidently did not have such an annual cycle of seasons.
- Some have speculated how that God in tilting the earth may have done so by the impact of a large meteoroid, asteroid, or comet which by its force of impact changed the earth’s axis.
- This may also have been the means by which the canopy was collapsed.
- But that is all just speculation.
- God is certainly able to effect such change directly without the agency of some astronomical body.
- One thing is clear, God promised the seasons as we know them today to be reliable as long as the earth remains.
- He also promised that the day and night cycle would not cease.